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POLISH CHURCHES in MANITOBA



by EDWARD M. HUBICZ

VERITAS

POLISH CHURCHES IN MANITOBA...

is more than a collection of historical sketches. It is the history of the Polish churches in Manitoba interwoven with facts about the people who built these churches.

For over sixty years the Poles in Manitoba have lived their Catholic life and carried on their religious traditions, but no one has yet recorded this phase of their activities. Father Hubicz has painstakingly gathered "these fragments of history ... lest the passage of too many years dim and obscure the share which the Poles have so manifestly contributed to the growth of the Church in Manitoba. There is nothing in that history but will enhance the Polish name. It is the unadorned story of a people striving to retain its Faith in the midst of poverty, in unrelenting toil, and often in hostile surroundings".

(Continued on back flap)

St. Joseph's College
U. of Alta., Edmonton

POLISH CHURCHES IN MANITOBA

A COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL SKETCHES

POLISH CHURCHES
IN MANITOBA



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BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

The History of Our Lady of the Lake Church

Father Joe — A Manitoban Missionary

POLISH CHURCHES IN MANITOBA

A COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL SKETCHES

by
EDWARD M. HUBICZ

with a preface by
Most Reverend PHILIP FRANCIS POCOCK, D.D., D.J.C.,
Archbishop of Winnipeg



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St. Joseph's College
U. of Alta., Edmonton

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† PHILIP F. POCOCK,
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*To Poland's brave people,
 who have staunchly kept the Catholic Faith
 and
 preserved their Western Culture
 for a thousand years
 (966 — 1966)*

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PREFACE

THE AUTHOR OF THE HISTORICAL sketches which compose this volume is eminently equipped for the task he has undertaken. Born in Poland, he spent his boyhood and youth in the Parish of St. John Cantius, Winnipeg, where he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood in 1939 after having studied philosophy and theology both in Canadian and Polish Seminaries. Many of the Polish Parishes and Missions of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg have been the scene of his zealous priestly labors. From 1952-1957 he was Chancellor of the Archdiocese and since 1952 he has been the Archdiocesan Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

Through personal knowledge and diligent research he has recorded for posterity the heroic story of the Polish settlers who first came to Manitoba around

PREFACE

the turn of the century and whose numbers have grown through natural increase and by further immigration throughout all the intervening years that have not been marred by international strife.

Today, approximately one in every six Catholics in Manitoba is of Polish origin. Despite the fact that far more than half of this number reside in areas where Catholic Schools are not available, the record of fidelity to the Church and traditions of their forefathers is outstanding.

During the initial period of immigration, the poverty of the newcomers and the lack of priests who could minister to them in their native tongue were formidable obstacles which only a people of intrepid faith and determination could surmount.

The second period of immigration between the wars witnessed a growth in the number of Polish priests who came both from the United States of America and from abroad. This providential influx of clergy undoubtedly saved a spiritual heritage which might otherwise have been lost. But the great depression which shattered the economy during the decade preceding the second world war worsened the plight of the immigrants and rendered impossible the construction of adequate churches and institutions.

However during the last years the tide has turned. Many of the first churches have been

enlarged and embellished or replaced with artistic edifices. Next year the Benedictine Sisters will complete a new Mother House that will rank with the finest structures in the Province. These are but symptoms of a trend that will continue.

There comes a time in the history of every ethnic group newly-arrived in the country it has honored by its presence, when relieved from the economic pressure entailed in self-establishment, it turns enthusiastically to higher education which is a prerequisite of social leadership. That day is here for the Poles of Manitoba. With an ever-increasing crescendo our University and Catholic halls of learning will ring with the sound of Polish names. There will also — there *must* also be a steady growth in the number of vocations to the Priesthood from Polish homes. This will be the inevitable reward of the indomitable courage and of the loyalty to both Church and State that have characterized the Polish people of Manitoba.

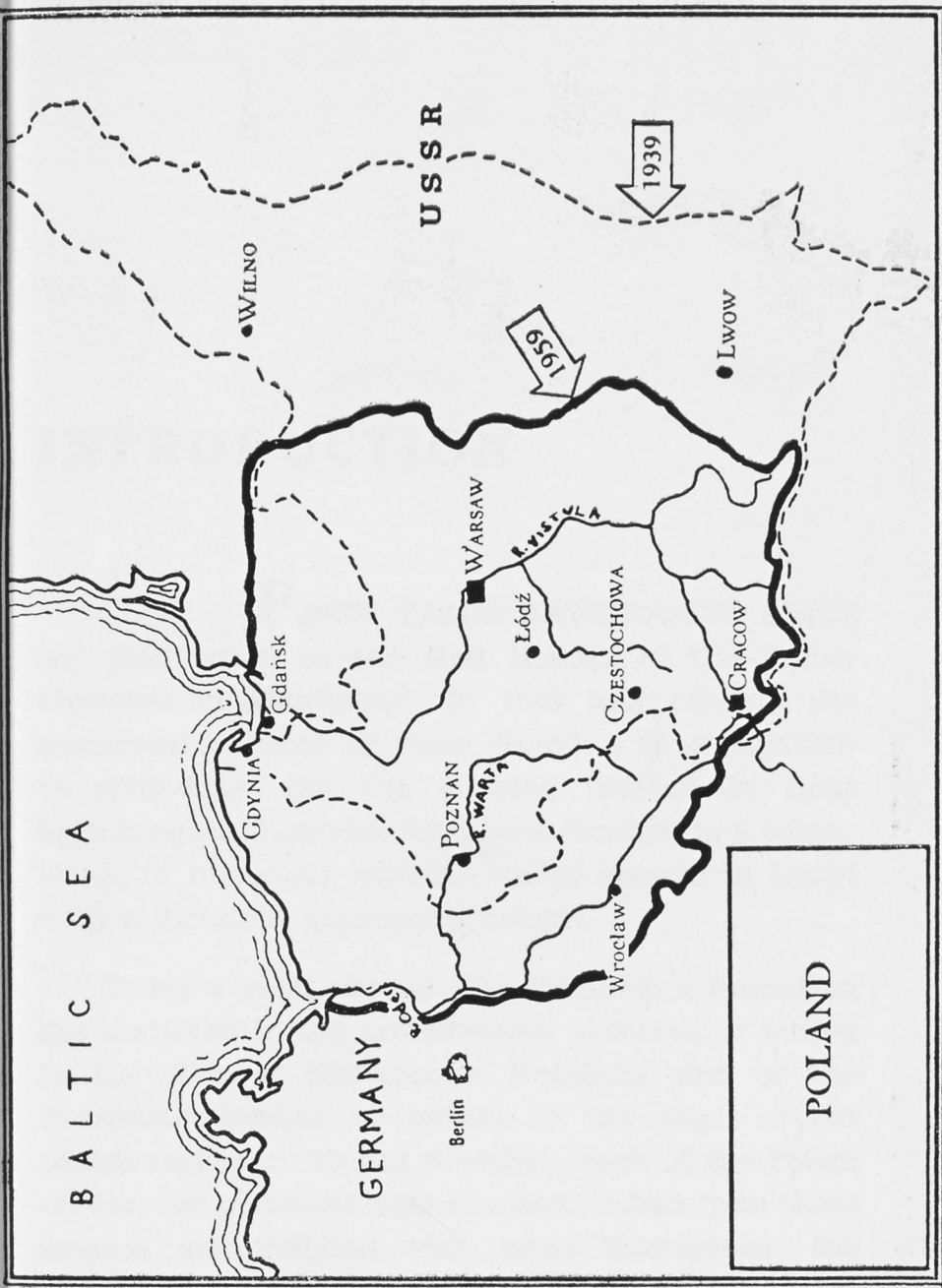
To Father Hubicz and to his Polish colleagues in the Priesthood living and deceased, I express my gratitude for their unflagging zeal and devotion to duty, often under the most trying circumstances. This volume is a record of achievement made possible only by a profound faith in God and an ardent love for the souls committed to their care. The story told here merits a wide audience of readers. It will create

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a deeper understanding and admiration of a people who aspire to shoulder here in Manitoba the full burden of citizenship in the Cities of God and Man.

October 20, 1960

† *Philip F. Pocock,*
Archbishop of Winnipeg



INTRODUCTION

FIFTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE the publication of the first history of the Polish churches in Manitoba. In that half century the numerical increase of these churches from eighteen to sixty-four, and the growing interest in their beginnings and development have resulted in a cumulation of historical material varied enough to tempt even a diffident amateur historian.

Today a great part of this historical information lies scattered in the archdiocesan archives, or buried in the files of the *Gazeta Katolicka* and of the *Northwest Review*, or hidden in the pages of old parish registers. To put it within reach of the Polish reader, the pertinent data has been culled from these sources and collated with what information the

INTRODUCTION

Polish pastors have recently supplied to the writer. The present volume is the fruit of that labor.

These fragments of history must be collected and preserved lest the passage of too many years dim and obscure the share which the Poles have so manifestly contributed to the growth of the Church in Manitoba. There is nothing in that history but will enhance the Polish name. It is the unadorned story of a people striving to retain its Faith in the midst of poverty, in unrelenting toil, and often in hostile surroundings.

The place which the Poles occupy in the Church in Manitoba need make them neither vain nor apologetic. Wherever the Polish immigrants settled in the backwoods of this province, they guarded the Faith as their forefathers did in Poland centuries ago.

To give some semblance of order to this study, a division into six parts has been adopted. The rough sketch of Polish history attempts to throw some light on the events and circumstances which shaped the Polish character, while the preliminary observations about the Poles in Manitoba aim to give a few facts about this ethnic group which, without leader or spokesman has, nonetheless preserved its individuality. Since the majority of the Poles in Manitoba live in greater Winnipeg, where they have built their

largest churches, the story of these churches forms the subject of the second part of this work. Each of the remaining four parts considers the churches in four respective sections of the province, arbitrarily designated.

Not only the importance of the church but the availability of exact data about it determined the space allotted to each historical outline in this collection. The mission chapels which were used only intermittently never exerted as great an influence in the life of the Poles as did the city parishes or other churches with resident priests. Some of these isolated chapels, used regularly in the early days, have since been closed or removed, due to a shift in population. Indications are that as the years go by, many more will vanish without leaving so much as a record of the date of their founding, of the names of the founders or of the years of their use.

Because the history of the Church in the Polish community in Manitoba cannot be told without mention of those valiant women, the Benedictine Sisters, their history also comes under brief review in these pages. Their thankless work, seldom acclaimed, has benefited not only the Poles or the Catholics generally, but entire communities in which they happened to take up residence.

If this study serves no other purpose but to

INTRODUCTION

reawaken in the Poles an interest in their Catholic past in Manitoba, its effort will have been justified. For that past, in which the Catholic Faith was cherished as the most precious Polish heritage, is a worthy guide for the future.

To the many Polish pastors in Manitoba who took a hand in the remote preparation of this work by furnishing the historical data about their churches, I acknowledge my debt of unending gratitude. To Father Lucien Socinski, for his wise counsel and his valuable suggestions, I express my particular indebtedness. Above all, I offer my heartfelt thanks to His Grace Archbishop Pocock, for his sympathetic interest in this work, which is unrelated to my pastoral duties.

E. M. H.

*Gimli, Manitoba
December 31, 1959*

PART I

PRELIMINARY NOTES

CHAPTER I

A GLIMPSE OF POLISH HISTORY (1)

EVEN TODAY THE NOTION IS sometime echoed that the Poles belong to a new nation which suddenly came into being after the first World War. Yet the Polish nation, and the descendants of the Poles on the five continents of the world, are preparing to observe the 1000th anniversary of the existence of Poland and of her conversion to Christianity. The Poles, therefore, who left their country for other lands, were forged by centuries of history with its triumphs and failures, its enthusiasms and illusions, its victories and defeats.

Poland always shared the destiny of her neighbors. The events which shaped their course, also influenced hers. If her borders were violated, other countries also saw theirs attacked. Unrest and disunity in Poland, were paralleled by upheavals and strife in the neighboring States. She held to her ambitions and aspirations just as they did. But she never used inhuman means to attain her ends.

A GLIMPSE OF POLISH HISTORY

About a century and a half before Poland came to the notice of history, the tribes inhabiting the reaches of the Oder and the Vistula Rivers, struggled among themselves until one, the Polians, with their princely dynasty, the Piasts, emerged ascendant. The Polians², thereafter, gave their name, almost unchanged, to the whole Polish nation, while the Piast dynasty ruled the country for four hundred years.

It boded ill for the future of Poland that the date of her entry into European history marked the attack of a German count upon the Polish Prince, Mieszko, whom tradition considers the fourth Ruler of the Piast family. The year was 963. By marrying a Bohemian Christian princess two years later and embracing the Christian Faith in 966, Mieszko avoided the pitfall of accepting Christianity from the Germans and thereby giving them a pretext to interfere in his country. Immediately on his conversion he undertook the christianization of his nation.

Nor was the first Ruler of Poland free from danger on the east. While difficulties with Germany held Mieszko's attention on the west, Vladimir the Great of Kiev, in a foray on the eastern border, took from the Poles Przemyśl and a number of other strongholds. This inaugurated between the Poles and the Ruthenians an endless succession of territorial conflicts, which were further accentuated when Vladimir accepted Christianity not from Rome but from Byzantium. This divergence of culture and religion which separated Poland from her neighbors on the east, and the wide dissimilarity of language between the Poles and Germans on the west, together

A GLIMPSE OF POLISH HISTORY

with her open and vulnerable frontiers, influenced the whole course of Polish history. The Poles have been trying to keep house in an open battlefield where two civilizations have constantly clashed.

The policy adopted by the second Polish Ruler, Boleslas I, named the Great, guided his successors for the next two centuries. He aimed not only to unite the regional princes and nobles, but to form a community of the western Slav peoples as a bulwark against Germany. The plan never succeeded, for no sooner one king achieved a measure of unity, than another divided the kingdom among his sons.

The internal strife which followed, the incursions of the Tartars and the attack by the German Teutonic Knights kept the country in ceaseless turmoil until the reign of Casimir I. This last monarch of the Piast dynasty, the only other ruler to whom Polish history has accorded the title of Great, laid the groundwork for Poland's greatest centuries of history. By bringing together Great Poland, the region around Gniezno and Poznań, and Little Poland, with its capital at Cracow, he gave a new unity to the country. While Poland enjoyed a hitherto unknown prosperity and harmony, learning flourished, centered around the University of Cracow, founded in 1364. It is said that Casimir found his country of wood and left it of stone. Until his death in 1370, he assiduously fostered every plan to win Lithuania to the Catholic Faith, and thus to disarm the Teutonic Knights, who under the guise of converting pagans, were establishing German power along the Baltic.

A GLIMPSE OF POLISH HISTORY

But the conversion of Lithuania did not come about until Hedwig of Anjou³ succeeded to the Polish throne. To strengthen the kingdom, the nobles and statesmen of Poland arranged for the young princess to marry Jagiello, the Grand Duke of Lithuania. In a pact signed at Krewo, which marks the most important treaty in Polish history, the Polish nobles agreed to recognize Jagiello as king of Poland, on condition that he, his family, and his nation accept the Catholic Faith. After his baptism on February 18, 1386, at which he took the name of Ladislas, Jagiello married Hedwig, and a fortnight later was crowned king.

At Grunwald, in 1410 — an outstanding battle date in the history of Poland — the Teutonic Knights felt the force of this compact between Poland and Lithuania. Although the victory which Jagiello won with his combined Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian forces did not put an end to the hostilities of the warlike Order, the Knights never recovered from the heavy blow dealt to their prestige.

National tradition looks upon the sixteenth century as Poland's Golden Age. By uniting Lithuania and Poland, the Union of Lublin in 1569, not only strengthened the two countries against the Teutonic Knights and the Muscovites, but extended the borders of the kingdom from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Renaissance Poland, steeped in the Latin civilization, was the Poland of Nicholas Copernicus († 1543).

Under Sigismund Augustus, the last of the Jagiellos, the Polish nation felt the shock of the

Reformation. The tolerant nature of the king, the curious interest of the nobility in new ideas, and the indolence of the major portion of the clergy, allowed a wide assortment of Protestant ideas to infiltrate the country. But Protestantism never took root among the masses in Poland.

Polish literature also experienced an efflorescence at this period with the works of the Protestant Nicholas Rey († 1569), and the Catholic humanist John Kochanowski. The unencumbered advance of Polish culture had the effect of an easy and spontaneous Polonization in Lithuania and Ruthenia.

With the death of Sigismund Augustus in 1572, Poland became an elective monarchy, and embarked on her unique experiment as a Royal Republic. As long as the king had collaborators like John Zamoy-ski, Grand Hetman of Poland and Grand Chancellor, no harm could come to the country. It was he who brought about the return to Rome of the Orthodox Church in Poland in 1596 at the Synod of Brześć. This movement of union with Rome originated among the Ruthenians themselves, and resulted in a higher intellectual and moral level in the Ruthenian Church.

Poland came upon dark days when foreign powers intruded themselves in the elections to the throne. From 1648 onwards, the country which had stood as a rampart of Christendom against Turks, Tartars and Muscovites, suffered a series of catastrophes which shook her to the foundations. At another sad period in Poland's history, Henry Sienkiewicz characterized this epoch as the 'deluge', and immortalized it in his famous trilogy ⁴.

The king, John Casimir, saw his country invaded by the Cossacks, then overrun by the Swedes so completely that only a miracle could save it. The miracle happened at Częstochowa, the last stronghold of resistance. There the prior, Father Augustine Kordecki ⁵, with a handful of soldiers gathered about the picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa, broke the forty-day siege of the Swedes. It was the beginning of a reverse for the enemy. City after city was freed until the invaders were routed. The king returned from exile, and on reaching Lwów, vowed that henceforth the Blessed Virgin would be venerated as 'Queen of the Crown of Poland'. To this day the Poles have remained faithful to that vow.

Although dark clouds had gathered over Poland, she still knew a moment of glory, when John Sobieski, as John III, crushed the Turks at the gates of Vienna in 1683. But the problems which beset the country, and the disunity of the people were more than the nation could bear.

Ruled by indolent or ineffectual kings who were imposed by foreign powers, her resources drained by a long series of wars, torn by civil strife, the exhausted country fell easy prey to her unscrupulous neighbors. True, Poland experienced a brief period of regeneration during the reign of Stanislas Augustus, but in 1772, Russia, Prussia and Austria proceeded to occupy Polish provinces which they had arrogated to themselves.

In Warsaw, the Diet worked feverishly to bring in reforms which were long overdue. But even the passing of the famous Constitution of May 1791, was

A GLIMPSE OF POLISH HISTORY

ineffective. Contrary to all hopes, the Constitution was followed in 1793 by the second, and in 1795, by the third partition. Poland was erased from the map of Europe. The black eagles of Russia, Prusia and Austria gloated over the prostrate form of the white eagle of Poland.

The second partition, in which Austria took no part, came as a result of an appeal to Russia by a few traitors, who sought their own interests. The third was brought about by the failure of Thaddeus Kosciuszko's uprising against the occupying Powers.

Kosciuszko returned from the United States where he had gone to help George Washington in the American Revolution. Rallying the Polish population, both peasant and gentry, in two months of fighting, he expelled the Russians from Warsaw and from most of the occupied territory. But the Prussians attacked him from the rear, took Cracow, and joined forces with the Russians in a siege of Warsaw. After defeating and capturing Kosciuszko, the Russians sacked Warsaw to the accompaniment of a great slaughter. The victors then fixed among themselves the conditions of the final dismemberment of the Republic, which the Poles had neither the power nor the unity to resist.

Poland's only hope lay with France. Polish emigrants, therefore, enlisted in Napoleon's Army, and Polish troops led the attack on Moscow in 1812. By way of reward, Napoleon created the Duchy of Warsaw, a mere buffer state, which enjoyed seven years of independence.

After Napoleon's defeat and the Congress of

A GLIMPSE OF POLISH HISTORY

Vienna, the partitioning Powers again cut Poland into pieces by artificial boundaries, which endured, except in the Cracow region, to the war of 1914. Although the 'Kingdom of Poland' or 'Congress Kingdom', received semi-autonomy, Russian interference inflicted severe humiliations on the country.

The Poles lived the years between the Napoleonic wars and World War I, in a sombre atmosphere of oppression, relieved only by the short-lived hope of the insurrections which were suppressed with profuse bloodshed. The Rising of 1830-31, Polish participation in the revolutionary movements of 1848, and the January Rising of 1863, brought nothing but cruel reprisals. Nonetheless, conspiracies and plans of action filled the intervals between these dates. In the Russian-dominated districts, the women showed their patriotism by deliberately wearing black, as a sign of national mourning, while little boys caught sparrows and attached strips of red and white paper to their feet.

Polish thought in those years of seemingly futile attempts to throw off foreign domination were put into words by her great poets. At the sight of his nation's sufferings, Adam Mickiewicz's Romanticism took a messianic turn. He saw Poland suffering for the freedom of nations. Sigismund Krasiński gathered the main ideas of Polish messianism and wrought them into a Polish system of philosophy of history. His thesis was that the destiny of Poland fitted into a general plan of Divine Providence, assigning to each nation a mission to carry out for the good of the others. The third great poet of the insurrection

period, Julius Słowacki, also found a mystic interpretation in Poland's sufferings. His writings throb with the very soul of Poland. But none spoke more eloquently of the glories and the anguish of Poland than did Frederick Chopin in his music.

The fate of the Poles, intolerable in the whole country, differed in the three parts of Poland. In the territories which they occupied, Russia and Prussia took brutal measures to stamp out every trace of Polish nationalism, even forbidding the use of the Polish language. The Germans, during the *Kulturkampf*, did not hesitate to imprison Mieczysław Ledóchowski, the Archbishop of Poznań and Gniezno, together with other bishops and priests. In Galicia, the district of Poland held by Austria, the Poles enjoyed a fairly large measure of autonomy, and there the work for independence went on within the limits of legality.

The decades preceding World War I also had their characteristic literature, inspiring hope in the future. Representative of the times were Maria Konopnicka, J. I. Kraszewski, Eliza Orzeszkowa, Bolesław Prus and finally Henry Sienkiewicz (1846-1916) ⁶. Sienkiewicz bolstered the people's hope by recalling the heroic periods of Poland's past. On the other hand Ladisław Reymont (1867-1925) ⁷ and Stephen Żeromski found their inspiration in the daily life of the peasant. While in music, Ignacy Paderewski expressed the hopes of Poland and carried her banner around the world ⁸.

These hopes for independence were not unfounded, for it was clear that the armed peace which

existed in Europe at the time could not endure. Joseph Piłsudski, therefore, even before the outbreak of war in 1914, prepared the nucleus of a Polish army, which would be ready to move as soon as hostilities began. On November 10, 1918, he returned to Poland, and a few days later became the first Chief of the restored State.

The thirteenth of the fourteen points of Woodrow Wilson's Declaration stated the necessity of creating an independent Polish State, which would embrace 'all the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations' and will have 'a free and secure access to the sea'. Lloyd George, among other European leaders, opposed the Polish claims to the last. The complete establishment of Poland's boundaries, which dragged out until 1923, were settled on the west by compromise, and on the east by armed conflict.

Without delay the Poles tackled the gigantic task of reconstructing their country, ruined by a hundred and fifty years of occupation. Finances had to be reorganized; agrarian reforms adopted; schools to be built and religious life restored according to Catholic tradition. The most striking result of the huge effort of rebuilding was the creation of a modern port at Gdynia, where only a fishing village had stood⁹. Internally, Poland had to cope with the problems of German, Jewish and Ukrainian minorities, while externally, she tried to assure peace with her neighbors, by diplomatic process. But Germany under Hitler already had sinister designs on Poland.

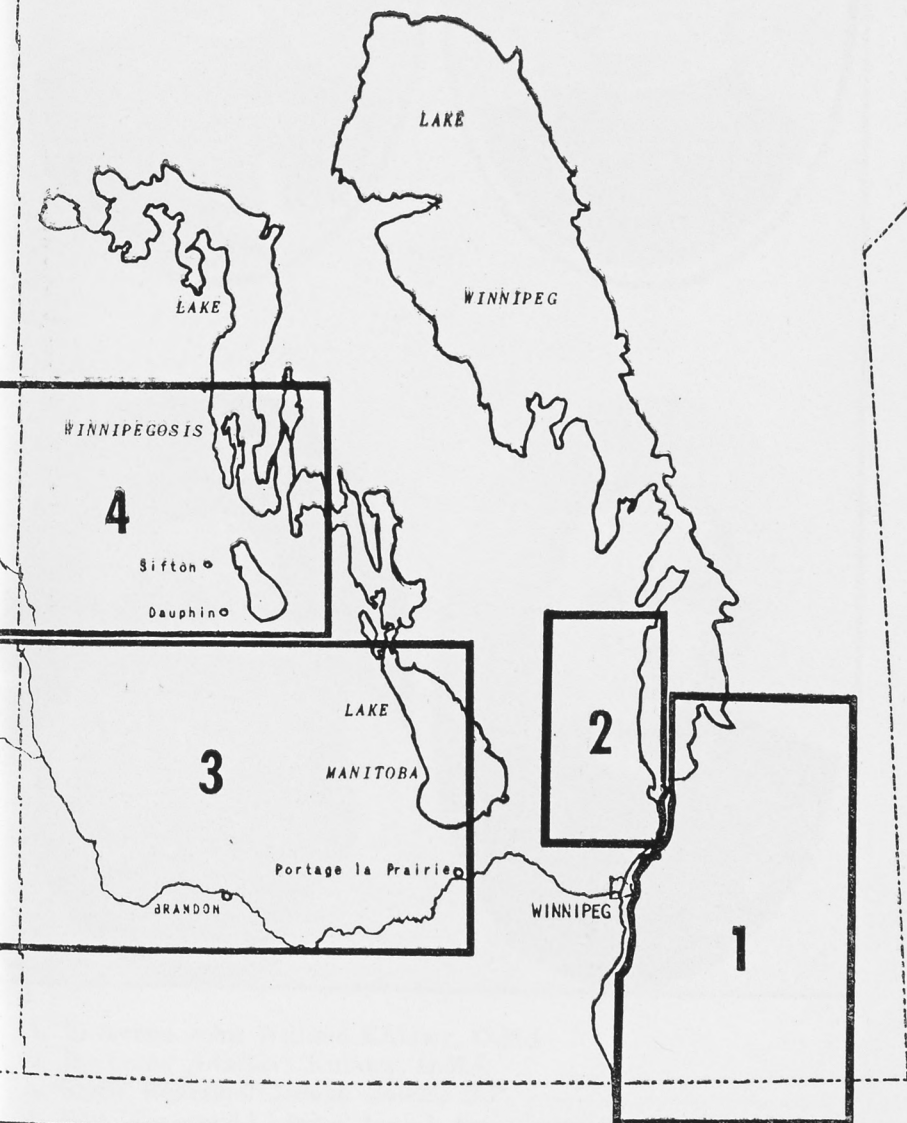
On September 1, 1939, without a declaration of war, the Germans invaded Poland. Overwhelmed by

MANITOBA (southern portion)

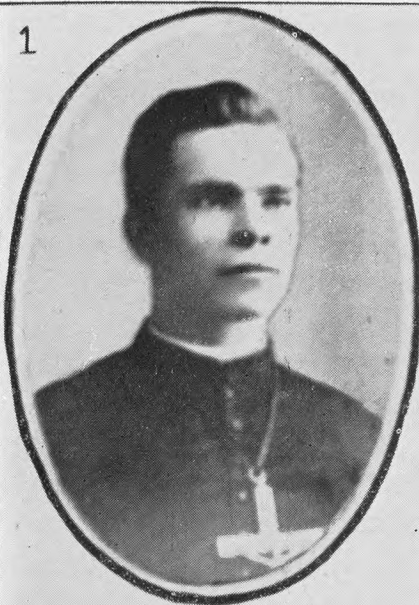
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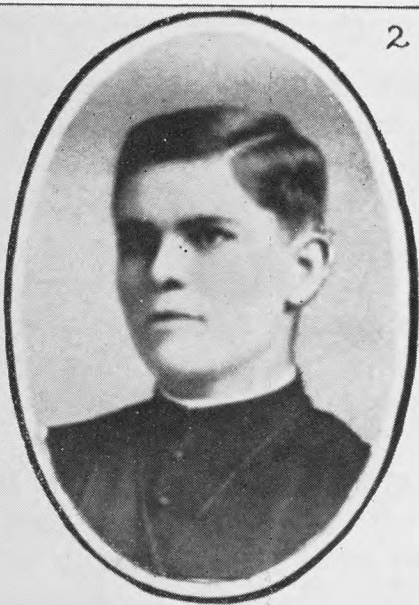
M A N I T O B A



1



2



3



4

1. Reverend John William Kulawy, O.M.I.
2. Reverend Adalbert Kulawy, O.M.I.
3. Right Reverend Joseph Solksi, D.P.
4. Very Reverend Ladislas Joseph Kręciszewski, D.D., B.S.S.V.F.

the weight of the invader's superior armament, the Poles fought desperately, until the Russians struck at them from the east. The country which had enjoyed less than twenty years of freedom, again fell victim to her powerful neighbors.

As a hundred years ago, fair-minded men protested indignantly the inhumanities Poland suffered; influential men sympathized loudly with her wronged people; but no one struck a blow on her behalf: she fought her battles alone.

From this ill-fated land and sorely tried country, the hapless Poles emigrated to Canada by the thousands. Of these, many directed their steps to Manitoba as to a land of promise.

CHAPTER II

POLES IN MANITOBA — FACTS AND FIGURES

IN ITS IDEAL CONNOTATION, THE name Canadian fits the province of Manitoba to a nicety. Within her boundaries, people of diverse ethnic groups have learned with singular success to live as good neighbors. She has acknowledged the right of the European immigrant to a place on her soil for his undaunted spirit in the face of overwhelming hardships: he pushed back her frontiers and settled her hinterlands. He won this right to recognition by a moral conquest. His descendants today have it by inheritance.

That 40,000 Poles fade almost unnoticed into this vast human patchwork, which is Manitoba, is not surprising. It is noteworthy, however, that this relatively small group, subject to so many pressures and influences, has retained its own identity.

According to his interests and his inclinations, the Pole in Manitoba lives in one, two, or three

different spheres of life. First he takes part in the broad community life of the province, where, as a member of a minority group, his influence counts for little. Second, as a Catholic, he is an integral part of the Church. In this community, he is no longer a minority. And let the truth be said: although his part in its growth has not been negligible, it has hitherto gone unsignalled. And third, he lives in the narrower circle of the social life of the Polish community, which exercises a beneficial influence on him by reminding him of his ethnic background and of the country of origin of his fathers.

If the Manitoban of Polish descent strips himself of his background and of his history, he becomes a featureless person. He has more to offer the community and the Church if he remains himself, namely, true to the traditions of his forefathers. To dissimulate his name or to disguise his ancestry, brings him not a step nearer to becoming a better Canadian. Should he lose his identity as a Pole, he has nothing of particular value to add to the diversity of Canadian life, and he becomes merely an additional digit in the census table. His course lies in retaining what was noble in the traditions of his fathers, the first Polish settlers in Manitoba, and weaving it into the pattern of life in this land.

Although, for purposes of ecclesiastical administration, the territory of the province of Manitoba falls under the jurisdiction of six Ordinaries or Bishops¹⁰, only in three of these jurisdictions do the Poles live in appreciable numbers, namely, in the

POLES IN MANITOBA — FACTS AND FIGURES

Vicariate of Keewatin, and in the Archdioceses of St. Boniface and of Winnipeg.

The largest groups of Poles living in the northern territory are centered around Flin Flon and the Pas, where the Polish Oblate Fathers served them for some years. From May, 1938, to September, 1939, Father Vincent Ferdynus extended his care over the Poles at Flin Flon and those scattered at Sherridon, Cranberry Portage, Gurney Gold Mines and even at Churchill. To give the forty Polish families at Flin Flon the opportunity to hear a Polish sermon, he celebrated Mass for them once a month at St. Ann's Church. The limited number of Poles did not warrant the building of a church for them; they, therefore, became members of the existing parish. They did, however, meet as an ethnic group in the White Eagle Society.

At the Pas, the ministry among the Poles began in November of 1937 when Father Ladislav Panek held regular services for them in the Convent chapel. Although he organized a Polish choir and provided the Poles with various forms of social entertainment, he found them too weak numerically to form a parish or to build a church.

These Poles, therefore, will not come under closer attention in this study.

Since the subject of this study are the churches in the Polish community in Manitoba, the question arises as to the origin and the growth of this community. Who were the first Poles in Manitoba? What accident of history brought them to this province?

It has been historically established that the first

Poles settled on the banks of the Red River as early as 1817¹¹. They were soldiers who formed part of the military escort of the Selkirk expedition, and who later remained as settlers in the Red River Colony. There were not less than ten of them.

Although the presence of Poles in Manitoba at such an early date was already known in 1909¹², it was Dr. Turek's study of the subject which brought to light the complete list of the names of these men and the circumstances of their arrival in this part of the country.

These Poles had served in Napoleon's Army in France, and in the changing fortunes of war, had fallen prisoner to the British. As a condition of their release, they had volunteered for duty in the Colonies. And thus, they found themselves in Kingston, when Lord Selkirk was organizing his expedition of colonists for Red River.

Their names, badly mutilated in the documents which list them, would be in their correct spelling as follows: Michael Bardowicz, Pierre Gandrowski, Andrew Jankowski, Michael Kaminski, Martin Kralich, Wojciech Lasota, Laurent Kwileski, John Wasilowski, Michael Isaak and Antoine Sabacki. Two other soldiers, one named Jean Meuron; the other, simply Pollander, also figure as Poles and Catholics in the censuses of the Red River Settlement¹³.

All these Poles did not remain in the Colony. Most of them left for the United States when a mass exodus of the Swiss from the Red River Colony took place after the disastrous flood of 1826. Others remained and died on Manitoban soil, while in 1849,

the census notes the presence only of Jean Meuron's family.

This detail of the presence of Poles in the Red River Colony is of minor significance in the general history of Manitoba. But in the study of the Poles as one of the groups which make up the population of this province, it is of more than passing importance.

The present Polish community in Manitoba began with immigration from Europe and to a lesser extent from the United States in the great population movement in the latter decades of the last century. Although it is noted that there were two Poles in the city of Winnipeg in 1886 ¹⁴, it was not until ten or fifteen years later that the flow of Polish immigrants to Manitoba became something like a steady stream.

Before the First World War, Polish immigration was made up of peasants from south eastern Poland ⁴⁵. Poverty and overcrowding in Poland forced many thousands to seek their fortunes in Canada, where they were attracted by the lure of free land. They took this land, marshy or heavily wooded, and in a few decades turned it into productive farms. They were people of the soil, and however great their discouragement at the first sight of their homesteads, they had the unbounded confidence of the farmer that the soil repays bountifully the labor put into it.

For many years these first settlers formed the backbone of the Polish community in Manitoba. They were content with little. They practised extreme thrift, and possessed the capacity to endure the hardships of pioneer life. It was they who built the

POLES IN MANITOBA — FACTS AND FIGURES

first Polish churches and chapels in Manitoba. To appreciate the harshness of their lot in the first years of their settlement, one but needs to recall that in leaving Poland they broke family ties, they left behind centuries-old customs which had regulated their life, and settled here penniless, strangers and often despised. The rapid growth of this province from a wild hunting ground to its present state of prosperity is due, in no small measure, to the courageous spirit of pioneers such as these.

The second wave of immigration from Poland, in the years 1918 to 1939, consisted mostly of tradesmen and a considerable number of the educated class. They immigrated to Canada because word had reached them that here was a land of opportunity. Their lot was easier. They found here their countrymen already well established, and wise in the ways of the country. Neither did they suffer the isolation and loneliness of the first Polish immigrants in Manitoba.

From 1940, in what may be called the third period of immigration, the Poles came from all walks of life. They were refugees or displaced persons, who could not, for one reason or another, return to their homeland. Among them were not only farmers, laborers and skilled tradesmen, but also army officers, intellectuals and professional men. Besides increasing the Polish population of Manitoba, they brought a new ferment and a further fragmentation into the social life of the Polish community. Their scale of values and their aspirations differ from those of the previous immigration, and the means they use to attain their

ends are sometimes strange to our Canadian way of life. But they gave a momentary stimulus to the secular Polish organizations, which were lagging for lack of interest. With the arrival of this latter immigration, the Polish population in Manitoba has grown to over 40,000.



An attentive glance at the population figures of the 1951 census reveals the numerical position which the Catholics of Polish origin hold in Manitoba in relation to the Catholics of other ethnic groups. The figures quoted concern Catholics of the Latin Rite only, or Roman Catholics, as they are incorrectly called, to which Rite the Poles belong. It is not belaboring the point to stress that the Poles are of the Latin Rite. There is hardly a Polish priest in Manitoba who, at one time or another, has not been startled by the polite enquiry from his Anglo-Saxon or French confrere: "Are you of the Latin or of the Greek Rite?" A well-meaning question, but vexing.

Inaccuracies invariably arise in census tables. For instance, a woman of Polish descent whose husband belongs to the Byzantine Rite (Ukrainian), will erroneously believe that by accepting the Rite of her husband (which she may do) she also has adopted his racial origin. This failure to distinguish between Rite and racial origin can affect the exactness of the census figures as it concerns the Poles.

For a total Catholic population of 156,283 in the province, the three largest groups of Catholics are

those of French origin, numbering 59,586, of Polish origin with 27,814, and Catholics of British Isles origin with 24,498. The balance is accounted for by Catholics of diverse other racial groups.

In the cosmopolitan city of Winnipeg, the three leading groups of Catholics are those of Polish, British Isles and French origin in that order, numbering 10,295, 9,535, and 7,943 members respectively.

The distribution of Catholics of Polish descent between the Archdioceses of Winnipeg and of St. Boniface is more difficult to determine, as the census divisions do not correspond to the ecclesiastical boundaries. Nevertheless, due to the high percentage of Poles in Manitoba who are Catholics (80%)¹⁶, it can be safely estimated that Catholics of Polish origin are more numerous in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg than Catholics of any other racial group¹⁷. In the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, the number of Catholics of Polish extraction ranks second to the French¹⁸.



To classify as Polish sixty-four churches in Manitoba, is not to imply, either directly or indirectly, that only Poles must attend them. With rare exceptions, all these churches today include non-Poles in their congregations, and conversely, numberless Poles attend the churches, both urban and rural, of other ethnic groups¹⁹. The declared purpose of this classification is simply to record the participation of the Poles in the life of the Church, a participation which some grudgingly acknowledge.

The reasons for such a grouping are valid. A few of these churches became Polish by official declaration: they were established expressly for the Poles. Others, usually small and isolated chapels, have become Polish by the distinct predominance of Poles in the congregation. Either the Poles founded these churches or they have maintained them through the years. They became Polish by a tacit assent, and priests of Polish origin have consistently served them.

Not all Polish priests today work in Polish parishes, which is a healthy sign for the future. Neither is it deplored — for it is unavoidable — that some Polish parishes are manned by priests of other racial origin²². The Poles accept them willingly. When a non-Polish parish, regardless of its size, accepts a Polish priest as its pastor, then catholicity becomes a living reality.

Both religious and diocesan priests share the credit for founding the Polish churches in Manitoba. Of the seven religious communities whose members have worked in Manitoba, only the Oblates of the Assumption Province and the Missionaries of La Salette have established permanent missions among the Poles in Manitoba today.

For three years after the arrival of Father Adalbert Kulawy, the first Polish priest in Manitoba, the burden of the ministry to the Poles fell upon the Oblate Fathers and a Belgian Redemptorist missionary. Under their direction, the Poles began to build their first churches and chapels²³. None of these buildings exist today in their original condition.

all have been either enlarged and rebuilt or replaced entirely.

Although the Polish Missionaries of La Salette began their ministry in Manitoba at a later date, their resolute devotion in developing the Church in the Beausejour district equalled the zeal of the pioneer missionaries. Evidence of the success of their work, begun by Fathers John Zimmerman and Ladislas Sajek, is the flourishing parish at Beausejour.

Whereas, the Oblate Fathers visited the missions from their house in Winnipeg, the diocesan priests resided in the missions in miserable conditions of poverty and want. To Fathers A. T. Polaska and E. J. Kostorz, constant isolation added a grim touch of monotony to the daily trials of missionary life.

The least that can be said of the early Polish priests in Manitoba is that they saved a large segment of the Catholic population for the Church. Without their watchful care, the Poles would have foundered in the strange surroundings and the intolerant atmosphere which pressed upon them from every side. The thirty-one Polish priests in Manitoba today have taken up the spiritual burden inherited from their one hundred Polish predecessors, and continue the tradition of selfless work and unfailing devotion.

THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS

The success of the Benedictine Sisters in establishing their Community while carrying on their work for the Church, is undoubtedly one of the proudest

pages in the annals of the Poles in Manitoba. Their story is one of pioneering in conditions of arduous labor and untold trials. Not only did they share the hardships of the first settlers and the missionaries but they prospered in the midst of all manner of obstacles and adversities. Only to His elect does God confide such heavy tasks.

If their coming to Manitoba was providential their remaining here was more so. Today we know the numerous good works which would have never been fulfilled had the Benedictine Sisters not stayed in Manitoba.

It was Father John Kulawy, then pastor of the new parish of the Holy Ghost in Winnipeg, who induced the Benedictine Sisters to come to Winnipeg when he opened a school in his parish in 1902. It soon became apparent that the school could not prosper without the help of Sisters. He, therefore, appealed to the Community of Benedictine Sisters in Duluth Minnesota, for a teaching staff for the school ²⁴.

The Sisters answered his appeal and in 1903 four sisters arrived in Winnipeg to take up their duties. Year after year, the little group of nuns came from Duluth for the school term, and returned to their Motherhouse for the summer months, usually taking with them a few candidates for their Community.

But in 1912, the Superior informed Father Francis Kowalski, pastor of the parish, that the Benedictine Sisters could no longer staff his parish school. Much upset by this unfavourable turn of events, Father Kowalski informed Archbishop Lan

gevin of his predicament. Their efforts to obtain Sisters from other Communities failed. Yet Sisters they must have to assure the school's remaining open.

The Archbishop, therefore, established a new Benedictine Community, of which the first members were Sisters Veronica, Candida, Ladislav and Kostka.

On August 19, 1912, he celebrated Mass in the Sisters' chapel with several of the clergy in attendance, and then he addressed the four nuns who jointly formed the little Benedictine family. He advised them that his undertaking had already been approved by the Holy See, and that they were a Benedictine Congregation of diocesan right²⁵. The Archbishop then appointed Sister Veronica superior of the group, with the title of Prioress. She carried this responsibility for twenty-four years, guiding the Community through its most distressing period.

The Community was formed but it had neither house, nor money with which to purchase one. The Sisters found that their total liquid assets amounted to twenty-seven cents. Consequently, they went begging among the people of Winnipeg, and the response was generous. A loan was secured with which they bought an old frame house on Pritchard Avenue, near the Holy Ghost Church. It became their Mother-house. When school reopened, the Sisters were already lodged in their convent. As the building consisted of two houses connected by a verandah, they used the one under street number 311 as their residence, and the smaller building for an orphanage.

On September 8, 1912, a few orphans were admitted, and by the end of the year, some twenty tots

received their bread from the hands of the Sisters. All the work was done by the four nuns and the four postulants who had already joined them. And hard work it was since the Sisters taught school, cared for the orphans and did all the housework and cleaning.

The first postulants took the habit on February 11, 1913. That same year the Community was incorporated by an Act of the Manitoba Legislature.

But the Sisters were not satisfied with their location in the city. They wished to have a quiet place in the country. This they found at the end of the railway line near the village of Arborg, where they purchased three hundred acres of land and settled among the homesteaders. In true Benedictine fashion, they brought Christian charity, education and civilization to this corner of the province.

In the fall of 1915, a two storey frame building was erected and the seventy-five orphans, charges of the Sisters in Winnipeg, were moved to Arborg. The building had neither running water nor electricity.

In a period of their history when poverty and want were their daily companions, the next three years were a time of heavy trial for the Sisters. They were days of desperate need: at times the only food they had for their orphans and for themselves were the rabbits and wild ducks which Sister Candida brought home from the hunt. Only by practising extreme thrift and economy were they able to survive those dark years.

To add to their trials, Father Richard Kosian,

who served as their chaplain, was called away. For three years, the Sisters had Mass in their chapel only at intervals, when a priest visited them. They were even deprived of the consolations of their Faith.

But these sacrifices brought their reward. In 1923, the Motherhouse in Winnipeg was reduced to a mission, and the Arborg convent became the Motherhouse. This necessitated the erection in Arborg of a substantial three-storey wing, measuring ninety-two feet by fifty-five, with the modern conveniences which electricity can provide. On January 10, 1924, Archbishop Sinnott blessed the new convent and the chapel, in the presence of Fathers Nandzik, Solski, Grace and Zielonka.

The day was a high point in the life of the young community. In twelve years, its numbers had increased to fifty-nine Sisters, twelve Novices and twelve Postulants. The Arborg Convent (evaluated at \$100,000) housed the Novitiate and the Orphanage, while the Sisters conducted two schools in Winnipeg ²⁶, one in Brandon and the Indian Residential School at Camperville ²⁷.

When Father I. E. Zielonka became the first permanent chaplain to the Sisters in December of 1921, the Community was emerging from its bleak days. In the first years of his residence in Arborg, the old chaplaincy, situated about a mile west of the Convent, burned down. The Sisters replaced it with a spacious new residence, conveniently located on the Convent grounds. It was at the time, the last word in convenience for a Sisters' chaplain.

The Sisters' Cementery, which today is kept as

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neat as a garden, was blessed on September 30, 1927, at the same time that the outdoor Stations of the Cross were erected.

In 1930, the Benedictine Community counted seventy-one Sisters, ten Novices and eight Postulants. The Sisters further expanded their work to include the public school at Ledwyn, the Hospital at Russell, the Domestic Departments at St. Paul's College and at the Oblate Novitiate at St. Charles. They improved and embellished the Arborg establishment until today it stands like an attractive park in the district, an idyllic picture of peace and serenity.

No Community in Manitoba has fulfilled such a variety of works of charity as have the Benedictine Sisters. Their over-extension in numerous small missions throughout the Archdiocese of Winnipeg was a cause of concern to their Superiors, as it weakened the religious life of the members. Sisters living in little groups of three, four or five, cannot follow a true convent life. Although their presence in the small missions has been a great help to the missionary and to the people, they have been obliged to relinquish some of the small houses to strengthen their own community life.

A few of the small convents which the Sisters have closed were the schools at Sifton²⁸, at Polonia and at Bjarmi. Missions which are kept open to the present are the Hospitals at Russell (founded in 1925) at Winnipegosis (1937) and at Gimli (1939), as well as the Indian School at Dog Creek. The Sisters also staff the District Hospital at Birtle. In 1955, they accepted a mission in Oyen, Alberta, where they

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7 KANADY

Najprawdopodobniej, Ks. Arcybiskup L. P. A. Langevin, O.M.I.

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1. 1990-1991	2. 1992-1993	3. 1994-1995	4. 1996-1997	5. 1998-1999	6. 2000-2001	7. 2002-2003	8. 2004-2005	9. 2006-2007	10. 2008-2009	11. 2010-2011	12. 2012-2013	13. 2014-2015	14. 2016-2017	15. 2018-2019	16. 2020-2021	17. 2022-2023	18. 2024-2025	19. 2026-2027	20. 2028-2029	21. 2030-2031	22. 2032-2033	23. 2034-2035	24. 2036-2037	25. 2038-2039	26. 2040-2041	27. 2042-2043	28. 2044-2045	29. 2046-2047	30. 2048-2049	31. 2050-2051	32. 2052-2053	33. 2054-2055	34. 2056-2057	35. 2058-2059	36. 2060-2061	37. 2062-2063	38. 2064-2065	39. 2066-2067	40. 2068-2069	41. 2070-2071	42. 2072-2073	43. 2074-2075	44. 2076-2077	45. 2078-2079	46. 2080-2081	47. 2082-2083	48. 2084-2085	49. 2086-2087	50. 2088-2089	51. 2090-2091	52. 2092-2093	53. 2094-2095	54. 2096-2097	55. 2098-2099	56. 2100-2101	57. 2102-2103	58. 2104-2105	59. 2106-2107	60. 2108-2109	61. 2110-2111	62. 2112-2113	63. 2114-2115	64. 2116-2117	65. 2118-2119	66. 2120-2121	67. 2122-2123	68. 2124-2125	69. 2126-2127	70. 2128-2129	71. 2130-2131	72. 2132-2133	73. 2134-2135	74. 2136-2137	75. 2138-2139	76. 2140-2141	77. 2142-2143	78. 2144-2145	79. 2146-2147	80. 2148-2149	81. 2150-2151	82. 2152-2153	83. 2154-2155	84. 2156-2157	85. 2158-2159	86. 2160-2161	87. 2162-2163	88. 2164-2165	89. 2166-2167	90. 2168-2169	91. 2170-2171	92. 2172-2173	93. 2174-2175	94. 2176-2177	95. 2178-2179	96. 2180-2181	97. 2182-2183	98. 2184-2185	99. 2186-2187	100. 2188-2189	101. 2190-2191	102. 2192-2193	103. 2194-2195	104. 2196-2197	105. 2198-2199	106. 2200-2201	107. 2202-2203	108. 2204-2205	109. 2206-2207	110. 2208-2209	111. 2210-2211	112. 2212-2213	113. 2214-2215	114. 2216-2217	115. 2218-2219	116. 2220-2221	117. 2222-2223	118. 2224-2225	119. 2226-2227	120. 2228-2229	121. 2230-2231	122. 2232-2233	123. 2234-2235	124. 2236-2237	125. 2238-2239	126. 2240-2241	127. 2242-2243	128. 2244-2245	129. 2246-2247	130. 2248-2249	131. 2250-2251	132. 2252-2253	133. 2254-2255	134. 2256-2257	135. 2258-2259	136. 2260-2261	137. 2262-2263	138. 2264-2265	139. 2266-2267	140. 2268-2269	141. 2270-2271	142. 2272-2273	143. 2274-2275	144. 2276-2277	145. 2278-2279	146. 2280-2281	147. 2282-2283	148. 2284-2285	149. 2286-2287	150. 2288-2289	151. 2290-2291	152. 2292-2293	153. 2294-2295	154. 2296-2297	155. 2298-2299	156. 2300-2301	157. 2302-2303	158. 2304-2305	159. 2306-2307	160. 2308-2309	161. 2310-2311	162. 2312-2313	163. 2314-2315	164. 2316-2317	165. 2318-2319	166. 2320-2321	167. 2322-2323	168. 2324-2325	169. 2326-2327	170. 2328-2329	171. 2330-2331	172. 2332-2333	173. 2334-2335	174. 2336-2337	175. 2338-2339	176. 2340-2341	177. 2342-2343	178. 2344-2345	179. 2346-2347	180. 2348-2349	181. 2350-2351	182. 2352-2353	183. 2354-2355	184. 2356-2357	185. 2358-2359	186. 2360-2361	187. 2362-2363	188. 2364-2365	189. 2366-2367	190. 2368-2369	191. 2370-2371	192. 2372-2373	193. 2374-2375	194. 2376-2377	195. 2378-2379	196. 2380-2381	197. 2382-2383	198. 2384-2385	199. 2386-2387	200. 2388-2389	201. 2390-2391	202. 2392-2393	203. 2394-2395	204. 2396-2397	205. 2398-2399	206. 2400-2401	207. 2402-2403	208. 2404-2405	209. 2406-2407	210. 2408-240
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teach in a Separate School. The Sisters have curtailed the number of their works, the better to fulfill those they retain.

Today, the course of "Catechism by Correspondence" which was founded in Sifton in 1936 by Father L. J. Kręciszewski, is conducted by the Sisters at Arborg. The course has been integrated into the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, and serves over 2,000 children.

The Community which had been founded as a diocesan congregation, on the recommendation of Archbishop Pocock obtained pontifical approbation, and on January 29, 1955, was aggregated to the Congregation of St. Gertrude the Great. This Congregation is a union of several Benedictine Communities grouped to pursue more effectively their Benedictine ideals.

The work of the Benedictine Sisters is handicapped today, as is the work of many other Communities, by the general lack of vocations to the religious life. It must be remembered that many girls of Polish descent enter other Communities²⁹. The small Benedictine Community in Manitoba has grown to over one hundred members and its vigor gives promise of further progress and development³⁰ as their undertaking to build a new Motherhouse and Academy indicates.

THE FELICIAN SISTERS

A second community of Polish Sisters who worked in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg for a short period of

time were the Felician Sisters of the Detroit Province.

The first contact of the Felician Sisters with Manitoba began on the occasion of a visit of Fathers L. J. Kręciszewski and I. E. Zielonka to Buffalo in June of 1935. They discussed with the Superiors of the Community, the possibility of the Sisters establishing a house in Manitoba.

The Sisters showed interest, and Mother Simplicita and Sister Alexandra visited Winnipeg on September 2, 1935, to study the possibility of a foundation. Undecided, the two superiors returned home by way of Toronto, where they consulted Father S. Puchniak, pastor of the Polish parish. As a result of this interview, on October 12, 1937, the Sisters opened a house in Toronto. Today their work has been crowned with success beyond their greatest expectations.

The Felician Sisters of the Detroit Province made a more successful attempt to establish themselves in Manitoba, than did those of the Buffalo Province. Fathers M. Trzaskoma and Z. A. Baczkowski, then pastors at Grandview and Pine River respectively, initiated this promising undertaking.

On January 1, 1942, the Sisters took possession of the small, outdated hospital at Grandview. While preparing plans for a new hospital, the Sisters gave the old building a cleaning and scouring such as it had not experienced since its erection. They bought land in town on which they planned to build a hospital at a cost of \$200,000. But before these plans were carried out, the Sisters abandoned them for what appeared a lack of interest and encouragement on the part of those who stood to benefit most by the

project. The Sisters, therefore, withdrew from Grandview on February 17, 1947.

Their work at Grandview, as well as in the Polish missions of the district, where they taught catechism in the summer months, is gratefully remembered. Above all, the Polish priests recall the solicitous care of the late Mother Mary Salesia, who showed such sympathetic interest in the work of the missionaries in Manitoba ³¹.



If on occasion a note is interjected in this study, on Polish religious customs, it is to allay the fears of those who charge — ostensibly in defence of the Liturgy — that these customs violate the Liturgy. Prejudice sometimes wears the disguise of a righteous cause.

As a matter of obvious fact, religious customs properly understood, are an outgrowth of the Liturgy. They take over where the Liturgy stops. They apply the Liturgy of the Church to every day life. They are a point of contact between the Liturgy and the daily life of the individual.

The splendid Liturgy of the Church is something dynamic, and it bears a meaning only in its unfolding and in the participation of the faithful in it. The Poles being of a particularly impressionable temperament, are not satisfied with experiencing the Liturgy in church; they love to transplant the liturgical meaning into their every day life. Hence, religious customs. The breaking of the 'opłatek', the Christ-

mas Eve supper, the blessing of food on Holy Saturday and the blessing of flowers on the feast of the Assumption, are some of the customs closely linked with the liturgical seasons.

Only those inspired by the Liturgy come under the name of true religious customs. They need not have the specific approval of the Church, for they make no claim at being the official Liturgy nor at interpreting it. They are merely a popular application of it to every day life.

A danger exists in overstressing the external observance of customs without penetrating their true meaning. Customs use the language of symbols, just as the Liturgy does. When a symbol is employed for its own sake, it then becomes empty and meaningless.

PART II

POLISH CHURCHES IN GREATER WINNIPEG

IT IS NATURAL THAT THE POLES built their two largest churches in Manitoba in the North End of Winnipeg. The "Galicians", as the immigrants from southeastern Poland were called, made this once disreputable district their home. Here, the various Polish organizations have their halls and meeting places, and the Polish community of Winnipeg carries on its religious, social and cultural activities.

In time, the Poles spread to other sections of the city to the extent that, in 1935, Archbishop Sinnott saw the need for a Polish parish in the south section of Winnipeg. He appointed Monsignor Solski, after his retirement from St. John Cantius, pastor of the new parish of St. Casimir. The chapel of St. Mary's Cemetery served as a temporary church. But the parish was never developed and today, the Lithuanian Mission in Winnipeg bears the title of St. Casimir, a saint in great honor both in Poland and in Lithuania.

POLISH CHURCHES IN GREATER WINNIPEG

In recent years, the Poles of St. Boniface built a church in their city, bringing to three the number of Polish churches in Metropolitan Winnipeg.

Besides the priests working in the Polish parishes, two other Polish priests reside in the Greater Winnipeg area: Father John Warczak as chaplain at St. Mary's Academy, and Father Francis Strózewski as pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Weston. Father Walter Szumski, also of Polish origin, administers the Assumption Parish in Transcona, in the vicinity of Winnipeg.

A few years after their arrival in Winnipeg in the early years of this century, many Poles drifted to farms and landplots north and south of the city. Thus the Polish missions at Victoria Park and St. Norbert came into existence.

In spite of attempts to organize the Poles on a city-wide scale, they do not form a coherent group. The numerous Polish organizations in the city serve individual groups of Poles rather than the whole Polish community of the city. Besides a common racial origin, the strongest tie which binds the Poles of Winnipeg together is their Catholic Faith. The Poles are traditionally so loyal to the Catholic Church that only one Polish National Catholic Church has succeeded in holding a congregation in Winnipeg.

This National Church has evoked two attitudes among the Poles of Manitoba, both extreme. The Catholics regard this Polish sect as something of an oddity since they consider that Polish and Catholic are synonymous. On the other hand, some Poles magnify out of all proportion the importance of the

Polish National Church, thus hoping to convey the impression that the Poles adhere easily to other denominations. This is simply not so. The Poles who drift out of the Catholic Church, seldom join other sects.

This mood of strange, if not hostile reserve, by both clergy and laymen towards the members of the Polish National Church is not worthy of Christians. Archbishop Pocock set a happy precedent, which the Poles can well emulate, when he attended a function at the St. John Cantius Hall, at which an ecclesiastical dignitary and many members of the Polish National Church were also present. The intimation is not that Catholics patronize this group which has sadly strayed from the True Fold. But the members of a sect which came into being in unfortunate and shameful circumstances, deserves a show of decent sympathy and fraternal understanding.

Because the vast majority of Poles, while retaining their ethnic identity, prefer simply to be Canadians, as a group they seldom come into the news and their participation in the life of the community is often passed over in silence. Only occasionally and indirectly do they receive recognition, as was the case on the debate concerning the naming of the Andrew Mynarski, V. C. School in North Winnipeg ³².

Similarly, within the framework of the Church, the Poles are content to blend into the mass of Catholics. As a result, their contribution to the life and development of the Church is often ignored, even by the Poles themselves.

The fact that only three churches in the Greater

POLISH CHURCHES IN GREATER WINNIPEG

Winnipeg area serve a Polish population of about 20,000, does not indicate that the Poles do not wish to attend Polish churches. It does, however, show their willingness to take part in the broader Catholic life of the Church. They have never insisted on having enough Polish churches to accommodate the whole community of Poles.

Whether this acquiescence is praiseworthy or not has been much debated. The truth, however, stands that Anglo-Saxons, as well as other ethnic groups, prefer to attend a church where the membership is predominantly of their own racial background

CHAPTER III

THE HOLY GHOST CHURCH

OF ALL THE POLISH PARISHES in Manitoba, the Holy Ghost parish in Winnipeg has best succeeded in preserving its Polish-Canadian character. That character, which is a living in the present conscious of the memory of the past, is more deeply rooted here than elsewhere. And I venture the prediction that here it will endure longer.

The Oblate Fathers have helped two generations of Poles grow up in the Polish religious traditions. Both the Church and the Country are the richer for it. In this parish, the custom of chanting Sunday vespers, of singing the Passion in Lent (*Gorzkie Żale*) and of Polish congregational singing have given the people a true sense of community worship. The Polish hymns for the various liturgical seasons are engraved not only in the memory of the Poles but also in their heart.

The history of this oldest Polish parish in Mani-

toba has been so often retold that the great majority of Poles know it, at least in general outline ³³.

The parish owes its origin to the enlightened zeal of Archbishop Langevin. He felt a genuine fatherly concern for the new immigrants who were settling in the Archdiocese of St. Boniface in the latter years of the last century. His aim was not a hasty assimilation of these new-comers into the existing population of the country. His concern was for their spiritual welfare.

For the Polish immigrants of his diocese, the Archbishop wanted priests who spoke their language. He tried to obtain a Polish priest from the United States, but without success, since the same conditions of settlement prevailed there. Before 1898, he could at best get a Polish priest from the United States to come and preach an occasional sermon for the Poles at the Immaculate Conception Church ³⁴. He invited priests from Poland, but there too, he met with failure. He finally turned to his own Congregation, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Fortunately, two Polish students were completing their theological studies in Ottawa in 1898: Adalbert and John Kulawy. The Archbishop went to Ottawa and on April 20, 1898, appointed Father Adalbert Kulawy missionary to the Poles, the Germans, the Slovaks and the Ukrainians in his Archdiocese.

Father Kulawy arrived in Winnipeg on May 6, 1898 to be the first Polish priest to work permanently in Manitoba. He made his headquarters at St. Mary's Rectory, where the Oblate Fathers resided.

When news of his arrival reached the Poles in

the city, there was general rejoicing. When two Poles met on the street, the arrival of the Polish priest became the first topic of conversation and they shook hands and congratulated each other on the good news.

Father Kulawy arranged the first services for his new parishioners at the Immaculate Conception Church. He immediately saw the inadequacy of this type of ministry: the immigrants must meet in a church of their own where they will feel at home.

Father Cherrier allowed the Poles to call a meeting at the Immaculate Conception School. The assembly unanimously favored the erection of a church to serve the Poles, Germans and Ukrainians.

In spite of the poverty of the people, the Poles contributed \$400 and the Anglo-Saxons \$700 for the new church³⁵. Archbishop Langevin himself indicated the site for the new building and work began in the early summer of 1899.

On August 20, the Archbishop laid the cornerstone for the new edifice. On November 1, the first Mass was celebrated in the new church and on June 3, 1900, the Archbishop dedicated the church to the Holy Ghost, in recognition of the various nationalities which made up the parish. In a few years, the other national groups chose to build churches of their own, leaving the Poles with a parish deeply in debt. The Province of the Oblate Fathers assumed the cost of the construction of the church, which then amounted to \$7,733.

During the construction of the church, Father Kulawy began visiting the Poles scattered across the

prairies. He celebrated Mass in the newly-built log shacks, or outdoors, encouraging the people to build chapels in the larger settlements. But the task of caring for this dispersed congregation exceeded the physical capacities of one man.

Help came, when on May 8, 1899, his brother, Father John Kulawy, also a member of the Oblate Congregation, joined him in Winnipeg. The two missionaries made their living quarters in the basement of the newly constructed church. Not only they lacked all comfort, but even the bare necessities of existence. Often, for days, they subsisted on bread and tea.

The surfeit of work, both in the parish and in the rural settlements, did not deter them from organizing a school in the parish in 1901. They used the church basement for classrooms and they themselves taught the children. But the number of pupils increased so rapidly that the basement could not accommodate them. In 1902, they erected a three-storey school building, the top floor of which doubled as a meeting hall.

As a temporary staff, they obtained the services of Misses Caroline Czernigiewicz and Cecilia Krause, and Mr. C. P. Kamieński. But the efficient conduct of a school required a more permanent staff, and so it was that in 1903, the help of the Benedictine Sisters from Duluth was enlisted.

The Fathers had purchased a little house for a rectory. This they now gave up to the Sisters, and the same year they built a new rectory. Thus, in four short years, there stood the beginnings of a flourishing

parish at the corner of Selkirk Avenue and Aikens Street. With the arrival of Father Euch, in 1900, Father Charles Greczel, in 1901, and Father Codes, in 1902, the staff increased and the parish became a beehive of activity.

To distribute the work in their vast territory, the Oblate Superiors confided the parish to Father John Kulawy as the first pastor, while Father Adalbert remained in charge of the missions in the Saskatchewan territory, and Father Greczel visited the Manitoba settlements, where two Polish diocesan priests were also working. Then in 1904, to give Father Adalbert a respite from his missionary travels, they assigned him to the parish. But after a year, Father Charles Greczel succeeded him.

In the five years of Father Greczel's pastorate (1905 to 1910), the parish grew so rapidly that he enlarged the church, adding a transept, a sanctuary and a sacristy. The school also flourished with a record attendance of three hundred children.

For the next seven years, Father Francis Kowalski guided the parish through a period of consolidation rather than expansion. He opened the first Polish cemetery which, because of its unsuitable location west of McPhillips Street, in Old Kildonan, was later abandoned. Father Kowalski's pastorate ended abruptly when he ill-advisedly tried to forestall the division of the Holy Ghost parish.

When Father Leonard Nandzik took the direction of the parish in 1917, he concentrated his efforts on liquidating the parish debt. During his pastorate, the parish reached its first significant milestone: on

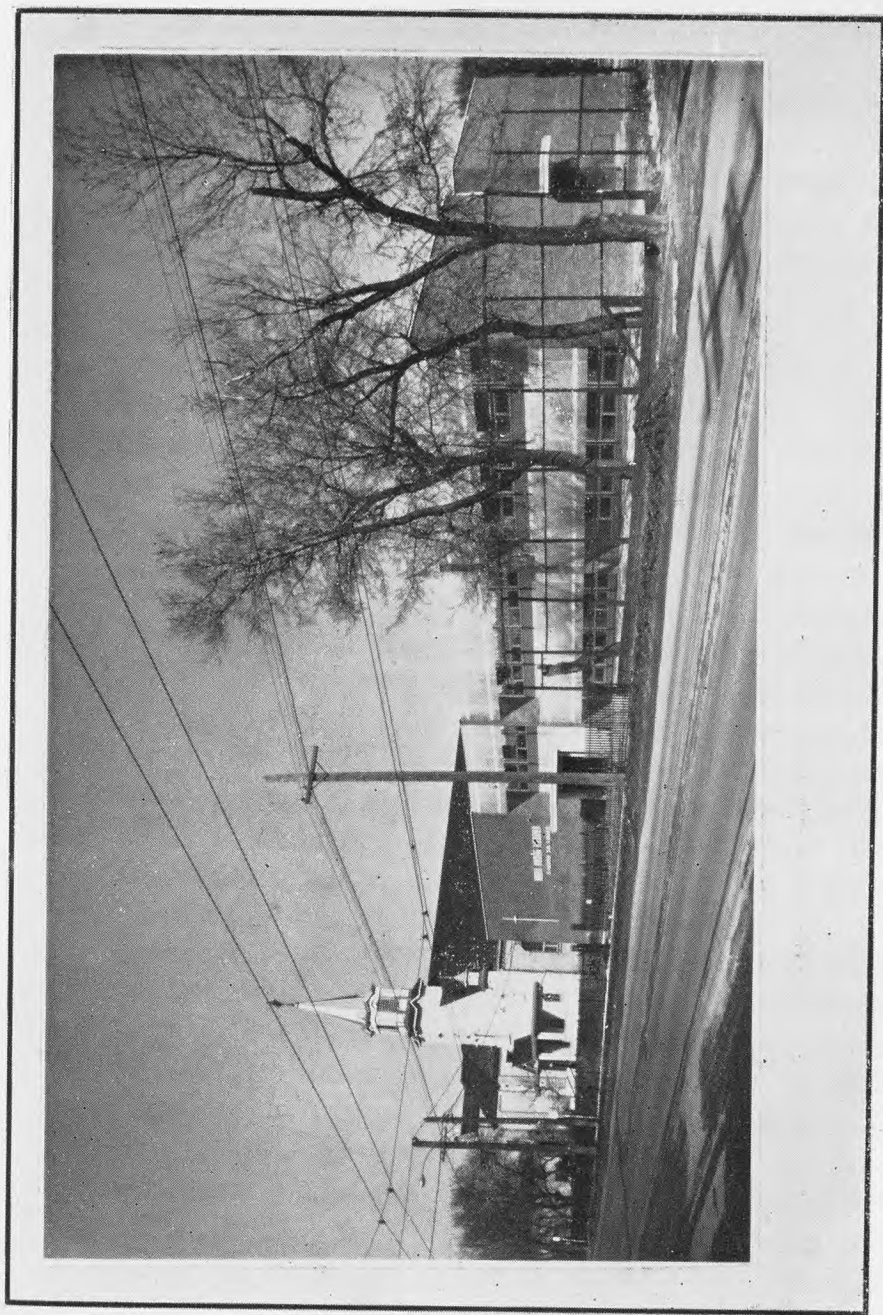
November 1, 1924, it celebrated its 25th anniversary. For the occasion, Father John Kulawy returned from Poland to preach the mission ³⁶.

In the twenty-five years since its establishment, the Holy Ghost church had become an important center for the Polish community in Manitoba. The influence of the Oblate Fathers reached far beyond the confines of their own parish. The *Gazeta Katolicka* which they published, enabled them to keep in touch with the Poles not only in Manitoba but also throughout Canada.

When Father Anthony Sylla succeeded Father Nandzik as pastor, in 1927, he added a new building to the parish plant in the form of a hall. It has since become a favorite meeting place both for the parishioners and for the Poles of the whole city.

A parish gives an unmistakable sign of its spiritual vitality when it fosters vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life. The Holy Ghost parish nurtured many such vocations. In 1933, Father Stanley Baderski, the first priest from the parish, returned to become its pastor. After seven years at the post, when Father Stanley Wachowicz succeeded him, Father Baderski was assigned to a second term as pastor in 1945.

With characteristic foresight, in 1940, Father Wachowicz opened a new Polish cemetery at Rivercrest, north of the city. When Father Anthony Rabiega (1949 to 1957) erected an altar surmounted by a Calvary group in the center of the cemetery grounds, he gave it a distinctive feature which none of the



Holy Ghost Rectory, Church and School

Milejszo Photo

other cemeteries in the neighborhood possessed at the time.

In the first year of Father Rabiega's pastorate the parish observed fittingly the 50th anniversary of the founding of its church. The sermon, preached for the occasion by Monsignor Zielonka, brought vividly into focus the distinction of the Holy Ghost church as "The Mother Church of the Polish Churches in Western Canada". The Polish priests and their people have established a long tradition of faithful service to the Church.

During his eight years in the parish, Father Rabiega kept pace with the times and worked successfully towards the spiritual, as well as material, improvement of the parish. One of the tangible results of his ministry was the capacity enrolment in the parish school. By structural improvements to the church, and the addition of many new furnishings, including a new high altar and an ornate tabernacle, he raised the dignity of divine worship. While the central heating plant he installed for all the parish buildings is unique in the whole Archdiocese.

His successor, Father Francis Kosakiewicz, who arrived at the parish in March of 1957, is no stranger to the Poles in Manitoba, having ministered to them at Tolstoi, Elphinstone and other missions in the early 'thirties. He has accelerated the tempo of life at the Holy Ghost parish.

He replaced the old parochial school with a new modern building which Archbishop Pocock blessed on November 23, 1958. It is the first parish in the city to demolish an old school building and to erect a new

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one. The parishioners well know that their parish cannot prosper without a Catholic school.

From the earliest years, the Oblate Fathers established societies to develop the spiritual and social life of the parish. They founded the *Holy Ghost Fraternal Aid Society* (1902), *St. Cecilia's Choir* (1905), a *Rosary Sodality* and a *Youth Club* (1907) to serve the specific needs of the parish. Other organizations, such as the *St. Stanislas Kostka Youth Society*, the *Sokol Society*, the *Polish Immigration Association* and the *Polish Alliance of Bartosz Głowacki* also had their origin in the parish. Some of these have since disappeared while others exist outside the framework of the parish.

In 1909, all these organizations amalgamated to form the *St. Michael's Association*. This attempt at establishing one over-all Polish organization has been repeated through the years with more or less success.



The first Oblate Fathers also understood the need for a Catholic press for the Poles. The press is an added means of enlightening the people.

The first Polish weekly to appear in Canada was the *Głos Kanadyjski* (*The Canadian Voice*). But lack of financial support brought its brief existence to an end (April 1904 to June 1905). The *Echo Kanadyjskie* (*Canadian Echo*), which succeeded it, did not fare better. It failed after a year and a half for lack of ideological support. It tried to fill the role of a Catholic paper, which it was not. In 1906, the *Gazeta*

Polska came into being. It brought on its own downfall by taking a stand unfavorable to the Church. After its disappearance, the *Gazeta Katolicka* was founded in 1908³⁷.

The first issue of the *Gazeta Katolicka*, which appeared on March 17, 1908, left no room for doubt as to its policy: in huge letters across its masthead, it carried the traditional Polish greeting: *Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus* (Praised be Jesus Christ). It was a Catholic paper serving an ethnic group which was almost entirely Catholic. The Poles received it so enthusiastically that, after a year, it expanded from four to eight pages. The *Gazeta Katolicka* fulfilled its mission well.

It owed its success, in no small measure, to the ability and devotion of its editor, John Pazdor. But as the Poles learned the English language and read the English secular papers, the *Gazeta Katolicka* began to lose ground. Soon it became apparent that the paper could not continue even under its new name of *Gazeta Polska*. Every scheme to save it failed. And it suffered the same fate as the *North-west Review*, the English language Catholic weekly. In 1951, after forty-three years of service, the *Gazeta Polska* of Winnipeg was amalgamated with the newly formed *Głos Polski* of Toronto. Today only the name of the *Gazeta Polska* is kept alive on the masthead of the Toronto Polish weekly.

CHAPTER IV

ST. JOHN CANTIUS CHURCH

THE STRAINED ATMOSPHERE which surrounded the division of the Holy Ghost parish in 1917 has been diversely interpreted. From a perspective of forty years, the plain fact stands out that Father Francis Kowalski, then pastor of the Holy Ghost parish, did not receive the proposition with enthusiasm because he feared for the future of his parish. The parish carried a huge debt. And with the reduction in size of his parish, he saw it saddled with this financial burden for many years to come.

A new Polish parish, however, was a necessity. The increasing Polish population in the city of Winnipeg had twice warranted the enlargement of the Holy Ghost church. More and more Poles were settling in the district west of the Holy Ghost church.

As early as 1912 ³⁸, Father Kowalski himself made an attempt to have a second Polish parish established. Archbishop Langevin even purchased a property on

Burrows Avenue west of McPhillips Street and, at the time of his death, was about to erect the new parish.

The need for this second parish became so urgent, that when its establishment was delayed, a group of laymen, without ecclesiastical authorization, began organizing it. They initiated a collection of funds for a new church which they proposed to call St. Stanislas ³⁹.

When Archbishop Sinnott took possession of the new archdiocesan See of Winnipeg, delegation followed delegation in the winter of 1916 on behalf of a new parish. The reasons for pressing for a second Polish parish were the long distance to the Holy Ghost church and the overcrowding at the Masses ⁴⁰.

In principle, Father Kowalski agreed with those of his parishioners who lived such a long distance from the church. His reason for postponing the division was his conviction that after the war (1914-1918) many Poles would leave the city, thus depleting his congregation to a number where the \$80,000 debt could never be liquidated.

The future, however, proved all his fears unfounded.

Archbishop Sinnott pursued his plan energetically. He drew up the boundaries, which also became a point of contention, and on November 19, 1917, he erected the new parish, himself choosing for it the title of St. John Cantius. The parish comprised three hundred families.

The next problem which faced the Archbishop was to find a pastor for the new parish. He obtained

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from Bishop Rhode a diocesan priest named Father Leopold Blum.

As the parish had no church, Father Blum held services in the German-Hungarian Hall, located at the corner of McGregor Street and Mountain Avenue. But he became discouraged after six months in these makeshift quarters, and resigned his post.

On May 18, 1918, Father Joseph Solski, then pastor at Sifton, took charge of the newly formed St. John Cantius parish, which not only lacked any assets, but had a debt of \$1,700.

Accustomed to the rigors and privations of the Manitoba missions, Father Solski took all the problems in stride. For a man of retiring habits and conservative character, he displayed unusual foresight and energy. His work betrays the guidance of the determined but fatherly hand of Archbishop Sinnott. His zeal, however, cannot be overrated.

He purchased lots on Burrows Avenue, between Sinclair and Artillery Streets, and began work on the church at once. The enthusiasm of the people matched his own. They worked so wholeheartedly that on the First Sunday of Advent in 1918, Father Solski celebrated Mass in the basement of the new church. He also built a rectory and a school, which doubled as a hall. As the lumber for these buildings had been salvaged from the old Exhibition Grounds Buildings, the women scrubbed each board to clean it of dust and grime.

When the walls of the church rose twelve feet above the ground, they were capped with a roof, and the completion of the building was left to a later

date. It was this roof which a violent windstorm ripped off in 1919, strewing the debris about the churchyard and flooding the basement. But the zeal of the parishioners was equal to the situation. They came of their own accord, bailed the water out of the basement and rebuilt the roof ⁴¹.

In 1925, when work was resumed on the church, again the parish responded generously. Men volunteered their labor. Some who worked on night shifts in the Weston Shops of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company worked on the church during the day. The walls of the building rose steadily and a new landmark took shape on Burrows Avenue. The reward of their labor came on October 18, when Archbishop Sinnott blessed the new church in the presence of a great number of the clergy and an immense gathering of people ⁴². It was a proud day not only for the members of the St. John Cantius parish, but for all the Poles in Manitoba.

The estimated value of the buildings at the time was \$70,000, with a debt of only \$20,000, the balance having been paid by the three hundred families. Both the pastor and his parishioners made sacrifices willingly.

Father Solski worked relentlessly to reduce the parish debt and to furnish the church becomingly. In 1930, when the high altar was being built, he made a substantial personal contribution towards its cost.

The little parish school, which had only four grades, was the object of his special care. It prospered under the direction of the Benedictine Sisters. In spite of the inadequate accommodations, in 1922, one

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hundred and ten children were enrolled ⁴³. Through the recurring difficulties on account of the school, Father Solski, nevertheless, kept it open throughout his pastorate.

Unfortunately, a rift developed in the parish, seriously threatening its unity. It was the work of one or two individuals, who looked with envy on the leadership of the parish priest. They sowed discord to alienate the parishioners from their pastor and to undermine their confidence in him. They betrayed the trust the pastor had put in his people. Eventually, after sixteen years of painstaking labor to build up the parish, Father Solski retired to save the fruits of his own sacrifices.

In February of 1934, Father I. E. Zielonka was named pastor of St. John Cantius church. Of the numerous and varied problems which confronted him, the most pressing was the parish school. It was still housed in the parish hall, grown shabby with age and use, its portable partitions between the classrooms providing poor teaching facilities.

To keep the school open, the building would require extensive repairs. Since the financial condition of the parish was not secure at the time, after consultation with Archbishop Sinnott, Father Zielonka closed the parish school.

Almost immediately after taking charge of the parish, Father Zielonka decorated the interior of the church, which had not yet been painted. As time went on, not only did he maintain the parish buildings, but he constantly improved and modernized them. The basement of the church was divided to

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provide convenient club rooms where the Catholic Women's League of the parish carry on their activities. And the latest improvement was the replacing of the wooden front stairs by substantial concrete steps which match the architecture of the church. Today, St. John Cantius parish can boast of a church second to none in the city of Winnipeg.

In 1944, the Holy Father conferred upon Father Zielonka the dignity of Domestic Prelate. Archbishop Sinnott recommended him for the honor, underlining the substantial contribution of the Poles to the development of the Church in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. A further honor was accorded him, when in 1952, Archbishop Pocock, in recognition of the large number of Poles in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, appointed him second Vicar General. On the death of the beloved Monsignor Kessler, he became the Vicar General.

In the past twenty-five years not only has the parish increased numerically, but it has also grown spiritually. Although the sons and daughters of the pioneer parishioners do not speak Polish fluently, many still observe the old Polish religious customs, thus giving the parish a marked Polish character.

St. John Cantius church has been the scene of five ordinations to the priesthood. There, Archbishop Sinnott ordained Fathers Alexander Korwin-Szymanski (October 2, 1921), W. Maciaszek (July 1, 1923), Joseph Kuryś (July 29, 1923), L. S. Faber (November 12, 1933) and the writer (July 16, 1939), who is the only priest from the parish.

The future of St. John Cantius as a Polish parish

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is in the balance. The new generation of parishioners are not as eager to deny their Polish origin as some would wish to believe: they are still proud that Poland was the home of their fathers.

MONSIGNOR JOSEPH SOLSKI, D. P.

Just as the name of Father Adalbert Kulawy will always remain linked with the Holy Ghost parish as its founder, so the name of Monsignor Solski will be revered at St. John Cantius parish. It might be argued that the parallel is unfair: Father Kulawy, by his courage and determination, showed himself the true pioneer, while Father Solski merely followed his example. Nevertheless, Father Kulawy had the support of the Oblate Congregation, whereas Father Solski, as a diocesan priest, stood alone. He placed his trust in the people, in their desire and their ability to build a parish.

Joseph Solski came from Poland to Detroit, Michigan, in 1908. He immediately entered the Polish Seminary at Orchard Lake where he made his theological studies and, in 1912, was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Rhode, the first Polish bishop in the United States. At the end of the same year, Father Solski came to Winnipeg and resided at the Holy Ghost rectory. From there he began his missionary work in Manitoba.

In 1913, he became pastor of Holy Trinity church at Sifton with eighteen dependent missions, scattered over an area of more than five thousand square miles.

He travelled by railroad, and places not situated near the railway he reached by ox-wagon over primitive trails.

For five years he traversed the country, going from settlement to settlement, gathering the Polish immigrants in the freshly built log-houses, celebrating Mass for them and administering the sacraments. He came to love the people for the hardships they were enduring, and to trust them as only an honest man trusts his fellowmen. Wherever he went, he brought cheer and joy, and the Catholics, both of the Latin and the Greek Rites, greeted him with enthusiasm. In more accessible places, he built little chapels and encouraged the people to erect churches in the hinterland where they had settled.

As he visited the settlements on weekdays as well as on Sundays, the people often met him at the railway station with processional cross and banners and led him to the church to the chant of hymns. Frequently, ten or fifteen couples would present themselves for marriage during his visit to a mission chapel. Seldom did he baptize one child on a visit: six, ten or twelve baptisms were a usual enough occurrence for him.

In 1918, Archbishop Sinnott recalled Father Solski from Sifton and entrusted him with the newly-founded parish of St. John Cantius. The present buildings stand as a testimony to his zeal, and the goodwill of his parishioners.

After sixteen years of work in the parish (during which time he still visited the Polish missions of Arborg, Meleb, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Polsen,

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Victoria Park and others), he resigned, broken in health and perhaps in spirit, over the dissension that racked the parish. Archbishop Sinnott first appointed him to the newly erected Polish parish of St. Casimir in the south end of the city. Later he went to Arborg as pastor, and chaplain to the Benedictine Sisters.

In recognition for his many years of tireless work, the Holy See, by a Bull of April 28, 1934, conferred on Father Solski the dignity of Domestic Prelate, the first Polish priest in Western Canada to be so honored. The news was acclaimed with joy. The investiture took place on December 16 at St. John Cantius church. The parish never witnessed a more solemn occasion. Archbishop Sinnott presided at the ceremony while Bishop Bona of Grand Island, Nebraska, preached the sermon. Archbishop Yelle of St. Boniface, Monsignor Kłowo, Rector of the Orchard Lake Seminary, and a great number of priest and lay dignitaries graced the occasion. The gathering had historic significance ⁴¹.

The honor, though conferred on Monsignor Solski, reflected on the Polish priests and people. For the first time, the Poles of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg had received official recognition.

His health failing, Monsignor Solski wished to visit once more his native village in Poland. He made the journey in 1936. It is reliably reported that, at Kamionka-Strumiłowa, he built a church and a rectory. But he dallied in Poland longer than he had intended and the outbreak of war in 1939 overtook him.

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In spite of his poor health, he evaded the Communists who overran the village. The church was destroyed and the aging prelate succeeded in reaching the western sector of Poland. There, in Poznań, he lived in a hospital conducted by Sisters.

After repeated attempts to leave Poland, he was finally allowed to return to Canada, and arrived in Winnipeg in 1948. His friends in Winnipeg rejoiced at his safe return, for they had given him up for dead. But the western climate proved too harsh for his ailing body. He then retired to the St. Boniface Home for the Aged.

Death came to the old priest on November 30, 1950. With his passing had gone a pioneer who spent a quarter of a century doing yeoman work for the Church in Manitoba.

The one great virtue which illumined his life was also the one weakness which darkened it: his deep trust in the people.

CHAPTER V

ST. ANDREW BOBOLA CHURCH — ST. BONIFACE

BEFORE THE FORMATION OF THE Archdiocese of Winnipeg in 1915, the Poles living in the city of St. Boniface attended the Holy Ghost church in Winnipeg, as their parish church. Quite naturally they continued to consider themselves parishioners of the Holy Ghost church, even after the erection of the new archdiocese. The archdiocesan boundary presented no obstacle when they wished to attend a church where they heard their own language.

This delayed the establishment of a Polish church in St. Boniface. To accommodate the Poles and to forestall this unnecessary crossing of diocesan limits to hear Mass, in 1943 Archbishop Cabana confided the spiritual care of the Poles in St. Boniface to Father Ladislav Panek, a Polish priest of the Oblate Congregation.

First for a term of two years (1943 to 1945), then for a period of five years (1947 to 1953), Father

Panek assisted the chaplain at the St. Boniface Hospital and ministered to the Poles in St. Boniface, at St. Norbert and at Transcona. Only when they had a priest of their own did the Poles realize that they formed a group distinct from the Holy Ghost parish in Winnipeg. Hence grew the idea, or rather the hope of establishing a Polish church in the Cathedral city.

Archbishop Baudoux was not averse to the idea. And when, in 1953, he placed Father Ladislas Pardyka in charge of the Poles, he listened with interest to the proposal for a Polish church in his See city. Father Pardyka soon had the plans drawn up and he set to work with unrestrained enthusiasm to translate the plans into reality.

Every one admired the vigor and energy with which he went about the task. He had very explicit ideas about the kind of church he wanted, and he held to those ideas tenaciously. His plans called for a large church in neo-gothic design, which seemed to exceed by far the needs and the means of the Poles. Archbishop Baudoux prevailed on him to reduce the size of the building.

When excavation for the church began in the early summer of 1953, the enthusiasm of the Poles equalled that of their pastor. They turned out willingly to help in what way they could to speed the project on its way.

From the outset, difficulties beset the undertaking. Twice the walls of the excavation caved in due to prolonged rains. This delayed the time table of work by many weeks. The outline of the building,

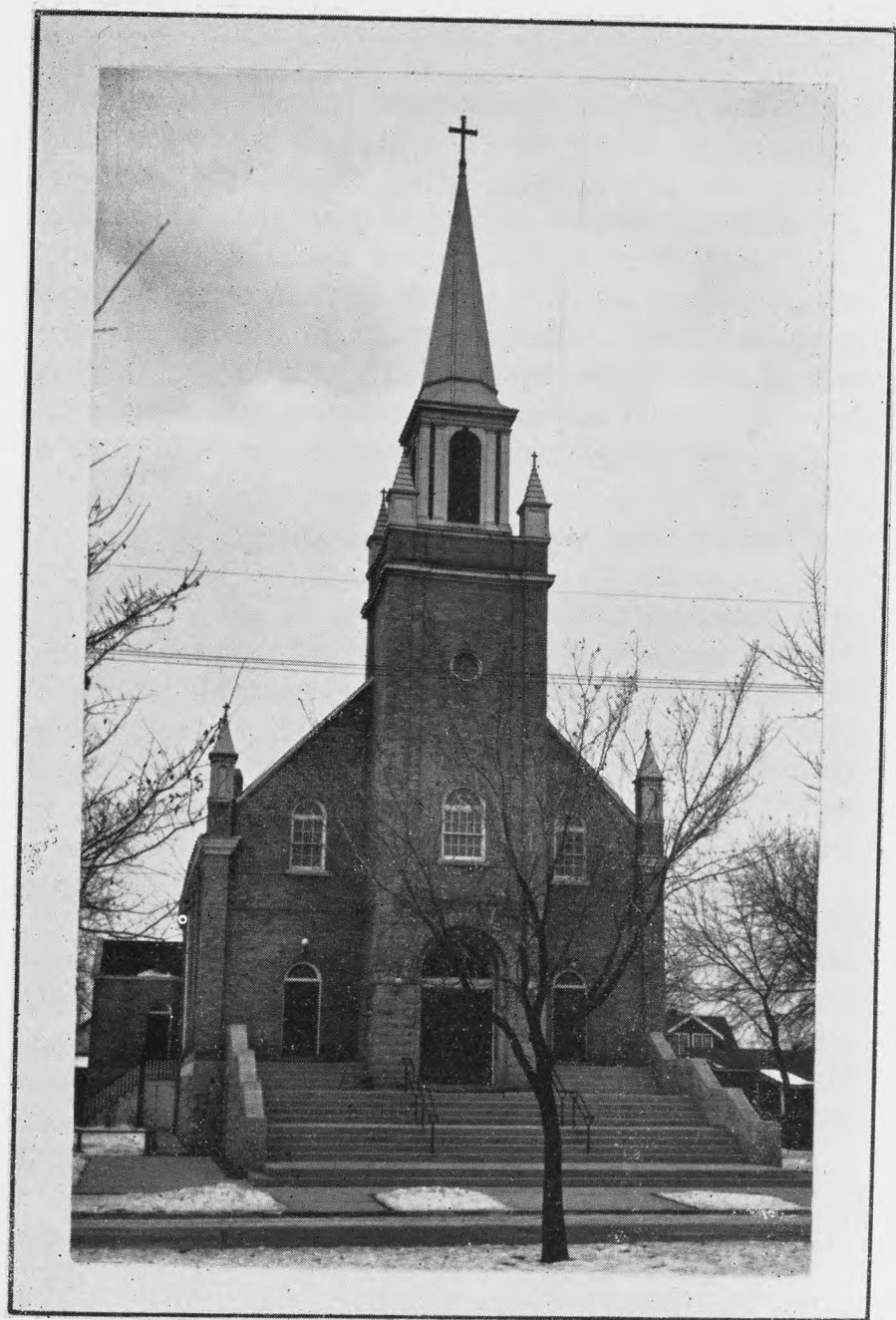
however, began slowly to take shape and it became apparent that the construction of the church would require more money than was immediately available. True, Father Pardyka had many schemes afoot to solicit help from the Poles not only in Manitoba but throughout Canada. The sum of \$45,000 he raised towards the cost of the church, testifies to his success.

But this sum fell far short of the amount needed to complete the building. Even with a substantial gift from the Archdiocese, construction was held up for lack of funds.

At this stage, Father Francis Wołoszyk took charge of the church on July 7, 1954. Father Pardyka had worked hard and initiated a most worthy project. But he had acted with more enthusiasm than foresight. He left Father Wołoszyk a task which was unenviable. The Poles in the parish numbered about two hundred and fifty persons; the church was still a shell of a building and the debt would have been a burden for even a larger congregation.

To Father Wołoszyk, this seemingly hopeless situation was a challenge. By dint of hard work, in a short time he succeeded in completing the interior of the building and even furnishing it with the essentials required for divine service. Today the outlook in the parish has brightened considerably.

This parish differs in character from the Polish parishes in Winnipeg. In St. Boniface, the Poles are encouraged both by ecclesiastical authority and by their environment to retain their ethnic identity and to preserve their language and their religious traditions. In Winnipeg, ethnic groups must withstand



St. John Cantius Church, Winnipeg

Milejszo Photo

ST. ANDREW BOBOLA CHURCH — ST. BONIFACE

a strong levelling influence which tends to assimilate them and to efface their national traits. If we consider the Holy Ghost parish as keeping an evenly balanced Polish and Canadian character, then St. John Cantius parish leans perceptibly to the Canadian, while St. Andrew Bobola inclines heavily to the Polish. Because of their proximity, the Poles, both in Winnipeg and in St. Boniface, participate in the same social and cultural activities which are centered in the Polish community in Winnipeg.

ST. JOSEPH'S CHAPEL — ST. NORBERT

The pastor of St. Andrew Bobola's church also provides services for the chapel of St. Joseph, situated four miles south of St. Norbert. The Polish settlement at St. Norbert dates back to 1897, when the Poles bought about thirty-five acres of land to a family on the west bank of the Red River. The early Polish missionaries regularly included this colony in their itinerary.

Even before the Poles built a chapel there in 1905, Fathers Kulawy, Polaska, Greczel and Kowalski held services regularly in the settlement⁴⁵. Today, the congregation of one hundred Poles have two chapels. Beside the original chapel, a new church was erected during the administration of Father L. Panek.

SACRED HEART CHAPEL — VICTORIA PARK

Another small mission sprang up about ten miles

north of Winnipeg when a few Polish settlers drifted in that direction in 1897. Because the district was already largely settled, they had less land than others. The men, therefore, hired out to work on other farms.

In 1909, the Polish settlement counted fifteen families. Although they had a cemetery of their own, they had no church⁴⁶. Not until 1914 did they erect a small chapel, which they replaced in 1938 by the present building.

Until the early 'twenties, Father Joseph Solski served the mission from St. John Cantius church in Winnipeg, using the trolley cars which then ran to Selkirk.

For the last twenty-five years, Father Maryan Orliński, pastor of Notre Dame church at Selkirk, has been in charge of the dwindling congregation.

PART III

THE EASTERN DISTRICT

As we cross the channels which the Polish peasants built in the rural regions of Manitoba, in settlement after settlement we find the same type of church: small, roughly-constructed, often inconveniently located. The settlers built these churches from the lumber near at hand. Although in some of the churches services were held infrequently, the church in each neighborhood gave them a sense of spiritual security. It filled a void in their life in the vast wilderness of the country.

In the Eastern District, which stretches from Lake Winnipeg east to the International Border and extends about fifty miles east of the Red River, the Poles today have fifteen churches. Seven of these are parish churches with resident priests, who also serve the other churches as vicars. Moreover, the pastor at Emerson is responsible for the chaplaincies of Brighton and Stuart, making up almost entirely of Poles.

AS WE SURVEY THE CHURCHES

which the Polish pioneers built in the rural regions of Manitoba, in settlement after settlement we find the same type of chapel: small, roughly-shaped, often inconveniently located. The settlers built these churches from an inner need. Although in some of the chapels services were held infrequently, the church in their neighborhood gave them a sense of spiritual security. It filled a void in their life in the vast emptiness of the country.

In the Eastern District, which stretches from Lake Winnipeg south to the International Border and extends about fifty miles east of the Red River, the Poles today have fifteen churches. Seven of these are parish churches with resident priests, who also serve the other chapels as missions. Moreover, the pastor at Beausejour is responsible for the chaplaincies at Brightstone and Stead, made up almost entirely of Poles ⁴⁷.

These parishes and missions, however, do not account for all the Poles living in the Archdiocese of St. Boniface. Let it be said to the credit of the Poles that here, as in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, they are found in almost every parish with the exception of the solidly French communities⁴⁸. In such circumstances, the Poles often neglect their Polish customs and traditions, but they are usually prepared to sacrifice these in order to remain faithful to the Church.

This facility to live on friendly terms with their neighbors of other racial origin, constitutes a Polish national trait. "Polish toleration", one observer remarks, "is not all pure virtue; it is in part due to a lack of combativeness, to a mind occupied with its own thoughts and, therefore, willing to leave your mind also to your own thoughts; to a certain Polish non-aggressiveness which is not to be confused with laziness, for the Pole is not lazy"⁴⁹. This tendency of the Pole to lean backwards to live on good terms with his neighbor results in another national characteristic; a blind admiration for all that is "foreign".

CHAPTER VI

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH — COOK'S CREEK

THE CLAIM OF THE HOLY GHOST parish in Winnipeg to have the first Polish church in Manitoba does not go unchallenged. St. Michael's parish at Cook's Creek contests this distinction. The first chapel at Cook's Creek was built in the spring of 1899 through the initiative of Anthony Kaliński, and the acre of land donated by Michael Śliwa is still the church site.

The records show that the first Mass was celebrated in the thirty-six by twenty-four foot building on June 3, the Feast of Corpus Christi. On the other hand, it is also a recorded fact that the first Mass was offered in the Holy Ghost church on November 1, of the same year. Father W. Grochowski, however, asserts that the chapel at Cook's Creek was not complete in June and that Father Greczel still found only the foundations and six feet of walls rising above ground ⁵⁰. Lack of money delayed the completion

of the building until 1902. This assertion seems to annul the claim of Cook's Creek to have the first Polish church in Manitoba.

Father A. Kulawy first visited the Poles in the Cook's Creek district in 1899, when he learned of their presence there from having met some of them at the Immaculate Conception church in Winnipeg where they travelled to attend Mass. In 1897, about fifteen Polish families settled in the region around Cook's Creek. Some had lived in Winnipeg a year or two, while others came directly from Poland⁵¹. Among the settlers were Anthony Kaliński, Charles Lentowicz, Michael Burkowski, Wojciech Nowicki, Anthony Węgrzynowicz, Andrew Szawara and Nicholas Łucko.

The region was dense forest, traversed only by an old Indian trail. Because the homesteads in the district were occupied, the Poles each bought about forty acres of land at \$3.00 an acre. It cost these grubbers untold sweat and toil to wrest a few acres of cleared land from the wilderness. It was estimated that, in 1909, there were one hundred and fifty Polish families in the area⁵².

In the summer, they worked on the bigger farms to earn money to pay off their own. In the winter, they cut cordwood for sale. When their means allowed them to buy a yoke of oxen, they sold their farm produce in the city. In about ten years they became independent, although not rich⁵³.

So rapidly did the congregation at Cook's Creek grow, that their church, when completed, after being three years in the building, was already too small.

They enlarged it in 1905 and two years later the blessing took place. The records contain much praise for the parishioners of the time. They were frequent communicants with many attending daily Mass in their small but attractive church.

The parish grew steadily until it numbered four hundred families living in the surrounding localities of Melrose, Garson, Tyndall, Sapton, Prince Ridge, Hazelridge and East Dale. In time, Garson, Tyndall and East Dale built chapels of their own. In 1949, St. Michael's parish counted one hundred and fifty families, and in 1957, over five hundred souls⁵⁴. It is the largest Polish parish in the Archdiocese of St. Boniface.

In the sixty years of its existence, most of the priests who labored at Cook's Creek were Oblate Fathers. For the first three years (1899 to 1902), Father A. Kulawy celebrated Mass there five or six times a year. For the next three years, Father Greczel held services more frequently and Father Sztojer inaugurated a regular monthly Mass. During his administration an attempt was made to establish a Polish school in the parish but the project failed due to the opposition of other ethnic groups⁵⁵.

The ministry of the Oblate Fathers at Cook's Creek was interrupted in 1912, when two diocesan priests, Fathers Camillus Grzybała and Joseph Szajnowski, were successively pastors for a period of eight years. When the parish reverted to the Oblate Fathers in 1921, Father Richard Kosian was appointed pastor.

Because the number of parishioners had out-

grown the small church, Father Kosian demolished it, sold what material could be salvaged and built a larger one on the same site. He also built the spacious rectory (which he occupied for only a year) when the old residence was razed by fire on December 28, 1937.

His successors, Fathers J. Czujak, K. Buchwald, W. Golus, and A. Walczak, each in turn left the parish in better condition than he found it. But in 1955, the work of the Oblate Fathers at St. Michaels's parish was again interrupted when Father Edmund Chart, a diocesan priest, became pastor. He took over a modern rectory and a church which ranks with the finest Polish churches in rural Manitoba ⁵⁶. He has not only kept the buildings in good repair, but has also added new installations to suit present day needs.

CHAPTER VII

SS. PETER AND PAUL CHURCH — LADYWOOD

THE PRESENT CHURCH OF SS. PETER and Paul at Ladywood stands in the heart of the district which the pioneers called the Brokenhead Settlement. It was one of the first regions in rural Manitoba to attract Polish immigrants. (The other was Huns Valley). John Bednarczyk settled in the area in 1883⁵⁷, when it was an expanse of bushland and marshes. More Polish settlers came in 1892. While in 1908, this same John Bednarczyk, in a letter to the Editor of the *Gazeta Katolicka*, reported that most of the land in the district was occupied, that the farmers had serviceable buildings, a church in their neighborhood, and that they were generally content with their lot⁵⁸.

Other early settlers, who bore the burden of pioneer life, were Martin Mondrzejewski, John Trojanowski, Francis Kubisz, Martin Omiciński, John Barski, T. T. Wyrzykowski, Peter Reich and Nowa-

kowski. At the time of their arrival, they still traveled from Beausejour to the Settlement by an Indian trail. But the district developed so favorably that in a few years two graded roads with drainage ditches were built through it. Whereas, in the first years, the settlers were forced to hire out as laborers to make a living; in a few years, they were full-time farmers ⁵⁹.

Father Allard, a French Oblate missionary, Father Woodcutter and Father Sigismund Świder, a Franciscan, were the first priests to visit the Settlement. They celebrated Mass for the Poles in the homes of John Bednarczyk, Peter Reich or T. T. Wyrzykowski. But Father A. Kulawy extended the first regular spiritual care over the district. In 1899, he visited Brokenhead four times (July 2, August 6, October 21, and December 8). It was he who persuaded the Poles to build a church in their neighborhood. When they began to cut timber for the building in the fall, he himself took a hand in chopping down trees. They spent the winter in gathering the necessary material for a church.

Although Father Kulawy also visited the settlement in 1901, Father Greczel was in charge of the nascent mission. He directed the construction of the church which after an interruption, was resumed in the spring.

Those pioneers were so eager to use their church that on June 29, Mass was celebrated for the first time within the walls of the structure, although still open to the sky. They completed the building before the winter set in.

Because the people had built the church with their own hands, without outside help, they took a keen interest in it. They gradually furnished it with all the requirements for divine worship. By today's standards it was a poor little mission chapel, such as people build who accept the poverty of Bethlehem as a reality.

In 1905, Father Andrew Sztojer succeeded Father Greczel as missionary and four years later the Oblate Fathers gave up their promising work in the Broken-head district, due to more pressing needs elsewhere.

Two diocesan priests, Fathers Rech Margos and A. Polaska, successively took charge of Ladywood until 1916 while residing at Beausejour. Father Polaska tried hard to transform Ladywood into a parish with a resident priest. To this end he persuaded the people to build a rectory. But when neither he nor his successor took up permanent residence there, the people whose hopes had been roused, became disappointed. They considered their work and expense in building the residence a loss.

After Father Polaska departed for the United States in 1916, the Oblate Fathers returned to Ladywood. First Father Leonard Nandzik visited Broken-head from Winnipeg, then he moved to Beausejour and celebrated Mass at the Ladywood mission twice a month for a whole year, until Father Kowalski succeeded him.

In 1920, events seemed to take a happy turn for the parishioners of Ss. Peter and Paul church: Father Richard Kosian came to Ladywood to reside as pastor. At last, the mission was progressing. There was joy

at Ladywood — but it was short-lived. For after a few months, Father Kosian was recalled.

These constant changes disheartened the people, they became disgruntled, and trouble began to brew in the parish. In 1921, when Father Meisner became pastor of Beausejour and the mission of Ladywood, he found himself in an embarrassing position. He observed that the trustees of the mission were abusing their trust by spending parish money wastefully and without giving an accounting of it to the parishioners. He tried unsuccessfully to correct the situation which became so tense and critical that he resigned his post in 1924.

The number of Polish priests in Manitoba at the time was entirely inadequate to care for all the Poles scattered throughout the province. Fortunately, the Polish Missionaries of La Salette appeared on the scene and the whole Brokenhead district was offered to them. The Fathers accepted the work and their labors have saved many from drifting from the Faith. So began a new chapter in the history of Ss. Peter and Paul's church.

The first Missionary of La Salette, Father John Zimmerman, arrived at Beausejour on May 13, 1924, and with patience and tact he smoothed out the troubles at Ladywood. In December, Father Ladislav Sajek, also of the Missionary Congregation, became pastor at Beausejour while Father Zimmerman took up residence at Ladywood where the church and its furnishings had deteriorated considerably in the twenty years since its founding. With gentle persuasion, Father Zimmerman encouraged the people

to provide new furnishings and later to build a new church. In 1925, without further difficulty, Father Sajek took charge of Ladywood as a mission dependent again on Beausejour.

To help in the care of Ladywood, he had as assistants from 1928 to 1933, Fathers Anthony Łoziński, John Zimmerman and Stanley Majka. Each served only a short time, until Father Zimmerman took the mission as his permanent charge. He revived the plan for a new church, which had been inaugurated by Father Łoziński. And the interest of the people was further awakened, when Archbishop Yelle, on a pastoral visitation on August 6, 1934, promised them a resident priest in the near future.

On January 5, 1935, the parishioners held a meeting and elected a committee for the purpose of planning their new church. The committee considered two sites for the church: one was immediately north of the school, the other was the then existing church site at the cemetery. At a subsequent meeting, a vote was taken and dissension broke out. In true Polish fashion, they could not agree on the site of the proposed church. Some were for retaining the site of the old church while others favored building near the school. Finally, they wisely referred the choice of the site to the Archbishop, who recommended the new site near the school.

In June of 1936, when excavation for the church began, Father Zimmerman went on a fund-raising tour in the United States, while at home the people collected what offerings they could at Ladywood.

SS. PETER AND PAUL CHURCH — LADYWOOD

Those were hard years and few farmers had cash available.

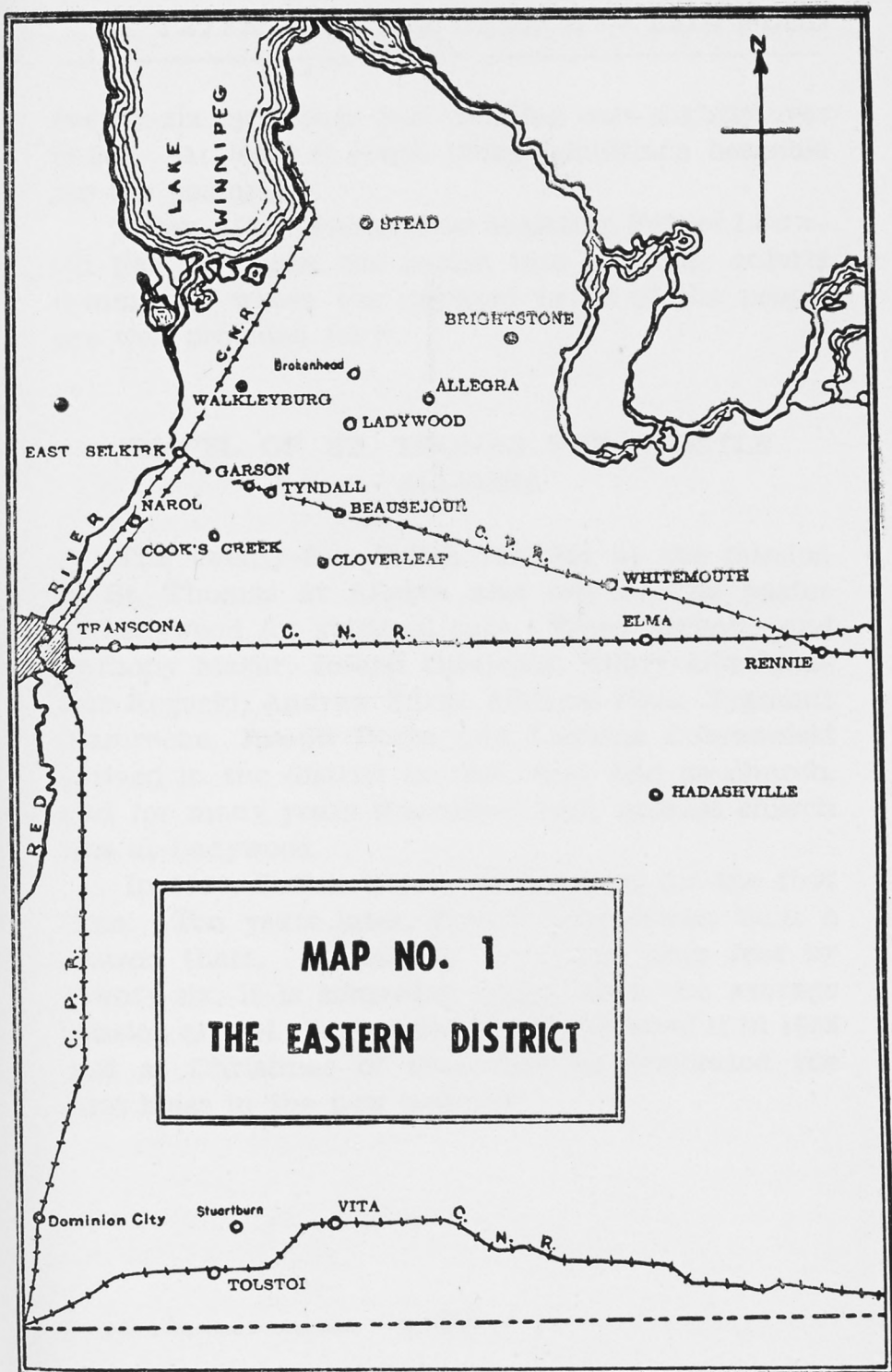
Work on the building progressed so satisfactorily that Midnight Mass was celebrated in the new church. The solemn blessing of the edifice took place on July 5, with a great gathering of priests and people.

The pastor then turned his attention to complete the church and to consolidate the spiritual foundations of the parish. The parishioners realized the debt of gratitude they owed Father Zimmerman for his untiring work, only when he departed in 1940.

The new pastor, Father Charles Litowski, arrived in Ladywood on August 7, 1940. He came from the United States where he had been administering a large and wealthy parish. His experience, his energetic approach to problems and his friendly and jovial manner stood him in good stead at his missionary post.

Although the parish had a new church, the rectory remained at the old site, where the cemetery is presently located. Its extremely poor condition when Father Litowski took up his quarters there, would have made a less zealous man lose heart. In the fall, all the mice of the area seemed to take refuge in the ramshackle house and a ground hog took up winter quarters in the attic. A month after his arrival he so tactfully presented the shameful state of affairs to the committee that the majority of them immediately saw the urgent need for a rectory near the church.

Volunteer workers soon began work on a house and by mid-December the pastor occupied it. The



SS. PETER AND PAUL CHURCH — LADYWOOD

twenty-six by twenty foot dwelling cost slightly over \$3,000. At least it made living conditions bearable for the pastor.

Today, after twenty years as pastor, Father Litowski has developed the parish into a stable, orderly community where the spiritual needs of the people are well provided for ⁶⁰.

CHAPEL OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE — ALLEGRA

The twenty-five Polish families at the mission of St. Thomas at Allegra also rely on the pastor of Ladywood for spiritual care. When Nicholas and Anthony Mazur, Joseph Gmiterek, Hilary and Ignatius Rogacki, Andrew Zdrill, Michael Mróz, Zygmunt Mamrocha, Joseph Duma and Ladislas Dobrowolski arrived in the district in 1900, they had no church, and for many years thereafter their nearest church was at Ladywood.

In 1926, Father Sajek visited them for the first time. Ten years later, Father Zimmerman built a church there. Measuring as it does fifty feet by twenty-six, it is somewhat larger than the average mission chapel. Father Zimmerman blessed it in 1938 and at Christmas of that year he celebrated the first Mass in the new building.

CHAPTER VIII

ST. MARY'S CHURCH — BEAUSEJOUR

THE TOWN OF BEAUSEJOUR CAN point with justifiable pride to St. Mary's Catholic Church as one of its most attractive buildings. The beautiful church is the cumulative effort of thirty-five years of selfless work by the Missionaries of La Salette. At the time of their arrival in the district in 1924, the Church was just emerging from the missionary stage. Since then, thanks to their zeal, it has made great strides not only in Beausejour but also in the surrounding district.

At the turn of the century, when a handful of Poles who had drifted in from Brokenhead, lived among the Anglo-Saxons at Beausejour, Father A. Kulawy, and later Father C. Greczel, visited them and celebrated Mass for them in private homes. The first Midnight Mass was offered in 1901 by Father Magnan, O.M.I., in the home of M. J. Hoban at Sinnott (now St. Ouens). Fathers Allard, Wood-

cutter and Belanger, travelling about by horse and buggy, on bicycle or on foot, likewise said Mass in the cottages and log-cabins.

Prior to 1909, during Father Belanger's administration (1905 to 1911). the parish of about one hundred members built the first church with funds provided by the Archdiocese. But because some protested the poor location of the church, it was sold to the Greek Catholics.

Although, in 1909, Father Rech Margos laid the foundations for the new church at the present site, it fell to Father Polaska to erect the edifice. An eight-room house was purchased for a rectory and the parish at Beausejour began to take shape. The pastor counted among his parishioners about fifty Polish families. At this date, the mission at Brokenhead showed greater promise of growth than did Beausejour ⁶¹.

A Pole who, for many years, played a prominent role in the community at Beausejour, was T. T. Wyrzykowski. He had come to Brokenhead in 1892, and later moved to Beausejour where he became a leading citizen, serving as town councillor and Justice of the Peace for twenty years ⁶².

The Missionaries of La Salette, after laboring seven years for the improvement of the church, saw their work laid in ashes when a fire destroyed the church and the rectory on September 7, 1931. Undaunted by this severe blow, in a year Father Sajek replaced both buildings. This was only the first of such trials which were to test the mettle of the La Salette Fathers and their parishioners.

The growth of the parish and the increase in the number of works undertaken, necessitated the help of assistant priests. Fathers Francis Ślusarz, Anthony Łoziński, Valentine Kustorz, Schil and W. Olszewski successively served in that capacity at this period.

Because of the growing importance of Beausejour as a parish, it was chosen as the locale for the Regional Eucharistic Congress of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, held on July 7, 1940. A great number of priests and about 5000 people attended the ceremonies, making it the greatest manifestation of faith the town had ever witnessed.

When Father Sajek left for the United States in 1941, after seventeen years of untiring labor, Father Peter Jaworski succeeded him. Father Jaworski took up with true American gusto the task of further developing the parish. With financial help from his friends in the United States, he modernized the rectory and put the church generally in better condition. But a new misfortune came upon the parish.

While he was absent in the United States, on February 4, 1945, fire razed the church to the ground. The Polish community in Manitoba received the news with genuine regret, because the church had been beautifully decorated and furnished with fine appointments.

Father Jaworski extended his stay in the United States and undertook a preaching tour to raise funds for a new church. In the meantime, Father Joseph

Gurka, the curate, converted the parish hall for use as a temporary church.

Immediately, the parish made plans for a new church which would far surpass the old one for convenience and appearance. Slowly and laboriously, the new building took shape, Father Jaworski and Father Gurka working side by side with the carpenters and the bricklayers. The result of this work was a solid, red-brick structure which does credit to the people of the parish.

The buildings and grounds of St. Mary's parish today present an attractive and well-groomed appearance. The picturesque grotto, depicting the apparitions of Our Lady at La Salette, is the scene of numerous pilgrimages in the summer months. The tidy rectory and the spacious parish hall testify to the efficiency with which the parish is administered.

The present pastor, Very Reverend Joseph Gurka, Dean of the district, with the help of his assistant, Father S. Przysiężniak, is continuing the work in the tradition of his predecessors in keeping St. Mary's one of the foremost Polish churches in Manitoba.

With the observance, on May 24, 1959, of the 50th anniversary of the building of the first church, the parish took its place among the older Polish institutions in Manitoba. Archbishop Baudoux celebrated a Pontifical High Mass on the day in the presence of numerous priests. The presence of Fathers John Zimmerman and Ladislas Sajek at the ceremonies and at the banquet which followed, served as a vivid

reminder that the hard pioneer days had been only recently left behind.

HOLY TRINITY CHAPEL — CLOVERLEAF

The chapel at Cloverleaf, under the invocation of the Holy Trinity, is today one of the chaplaincies served from the Beausejour parish. The Poles settled in the Cloverleaf region in 1910. Most of them on arriving in Manitoba in 1900, had first tried farming in the Cook's Creek area. Ten years later, they moved into the Cloverleaf district.

They were fifteen years in their new location before deciding to build a chapel. It was built through the initiative of Father Sajek, then pastor at Beausejour. He celebrated the first Mass in 1925, the same year the chapel was built.

Recently, two other missions have been attached to the Beausejour parish, namely, the chapel of the Visitation of Our Lady at Brightstone and Our Lady of Mount Carmel chapel at Stead. At Brightstone, all the parishioners are Poles, while at Stead only one Catholic is listed as being non-Polish ⁶³.

CHAPTER IX

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH — TOLSTOI

THE POLES LIVING SOUTH OF Winnipeg near the International Border are today grouped around the church at Tolstoi, in a parish of about one hundred and thirty souls, and around the chapel at Vita. This region of Manitoba never attracted a large number of Polish colonists.

In the early days, the whole settlement was known as Stuartburn, location of the only post office in the district. Later, when Overstone became the post office for Tolstoi, the region took the name of Overstone.

The first Polish immigrants came to this area in 1896 simply because the agents of the railway company directed them there. They were located on lands twenty to thirty miles from the nearest railway station at Dominion City. Among the first arrivals who remained to farm in the district were Martin and Michael Lipiszczak, Michael Kamiński

and Jacob Golecki. The threat of forest fires, the lack of roads and the ever-present swamp were the common hardships which beset the pioneers here as elsewhere.

One pioneer recalls with bitterness the harshness of life in the early days. The log-house which his father and some neighbors threw up hastily, had a thatched roof of wild hay which gave only partial shelter from the weather. The family slept on hay thrown on the dirt floor. Logs were the only furniture in the house, until they were able to salvage a few boards from a train-wreck in the district. With these boards from the box-cars, they made their first table and benches. The grain they salvaged from the wreck provided the seed for their first small crop.

Very often the children walked hungry to school, two miles away. For their noon-day lunch, they took coarse home-made bread spread with corn syrup or dipped in water and sprinkled with sugar. Their beverage consisted of a bottle of coffee made from burnt rye or tea brewed from a wild herb ⁶⁴.

Father A. Kulawy sought out these pitiful settlers and said Mass for them for the first time at Stuartburn on December 22, 1898. For three years, thereafter, he came to this settlement twice a year. Father Greczel succeeded him and, in 1904, built a chapel at Overstone. Two years later, the chapel was blessed and Mass was said there; it served until 1929. The most frequent visiting missionary to the district was Father Bronislas Heintze (1912 to 1927).

It was this same chapel which Father John Bednarz dismantled and rebuilt at Tolstoi. Father

Stanley Wachowicz blessed it in 1930 and, when it became the parish church in 1932, Father Frank Kosakiewicz took up residence there for five years.

His successors were Fathers Czujak (1 year), Casimir Buchwald (8 years), Francis Kosian (2 years), Francis Orzulik (1 year), Richard Latusek (9 years), and in 1958, Father Vincent Ferdynus, the present incumbent. This parish has served as a rallying point not only for the religious life of the Poles, but also for their social activities.

ST. ISADORE'S CHAPEL — VITA

For many years, St. Isadore's chapel at Vita has been attached as a chaplaincy to the parish at Tolstoi. Like the Tolstoi parish it was also known as Stuartburn in the early days. The beginnings of this little church were attended by a maze of confusion and indecision.

On the occasion of his first visit to Stuartburn in 1898, Father A. Kulawy also called on the few Polish families who had settled in the Vita region the previous year. Thereafter, every priest who ministered to the Tolstoi mission also visited the Vita settlement. When Father Greczel was at the mission in 1902, he advised the people to build a chapel. It took them four years to act on his advice, which they did with more hesitation than enthusiasm.

To encourage them, Archbishop Langevin donated \$100 towards the new chapel while a Catholic of the district gave four acres of land. Finally, in

the winter, the men began to cut logs and the people at Overstone promised to lend a hand.

After consulting with Father Greczel, they agreed on the dimensions of the church. But even before the actual construction began, doubt and suspicion crept into their minds. They feared that they would lose the church to the French settlers. Consequently, they abandoned the proposed site and acquired a piece of land a mile away.

About four weeks after this change of plan, some of the people met a farmer from Overstone hauling a load of timber which had been intended for this church. But he was delivering it to a different site, for a church at Overstone. This was a new development and the cause of more confusion. The previous site was abandoned and a third one was chosen where at last the chapel began to take shape.

When the walls rose three feet above the ground, the precarious peace was again disturbed and work ceased. As a result of this discord, a meeting was called to restore unity. The people decided to make a new start, and to move the chapel to yet another site — the fourth.

This time they wrote to Father Greczel to come to arbitrate their differences and to supervise the work. But their petty bickerings so disgusted him that he left them to themselves ⁶⁵.

The work, however, advanced to the stage where in July of 1906, Father Greczel said Mass in the unfinished church. The following year, Father Sztojer took charge of the mission and the church which was now almost complete, was dedicated to St. Isadore.

It had cost \$800 and much disharmony and dissension among the twenty families of Vita.

Today, the congregation numbers about sixty-five Poles, with little prospect of future growth.

CHAPTER X

ST. ANTHONY'S CHURCH — ELMA

THE DISTRICT WHICH IS TODAY the spiritual charge of the pastor of St. Anthony's church at Elma comprises three little churches: the parish church at Elma and two mission chapels, one located at Whitemouth and the other at Hadashville.

St. Anthony's church owes its beginning to Father Anthony Polaska. He was the first Polish priest to seek out the handful of immigrants lost in the backwoods around Elma. In 1912, he persuaded these Poles to build a chapel which he blessed on June 13, the feast of St. Anthony.

For twenty-five years, priests either from Beausejour or from Winnipeg celebrated Mass in the small church. Fathers Nandzik, Kowalski, Heintze and Meisner came there until 1925. Then for five years, Father Sabourin cared for the Poles there. And from 1930 to 1937, Fathers John Bednarz and Francis Kosakiewicz ministered to the settlement.

Thereafter, the Missionaries of La Salette took charge of the mission and developed it to its present condition. Most of the renovations and improvements to the church property have been made within the last ten years.

Father Francis Ślusarz bore the burden of being the first resident pastor at Elma. In 1938, he built a rectory and worked among the people for two years. Since then, almost every La Salette Father has taken a stint at this lagging missionary post. Fathers Stanley Majka, John Zimmerman, Michael Herbut, Stanley Pięta, Harold Bartłowski and Ladislas Mateuszek have all in turn experienced the hard, seemingly unrewarding work of the little missionary parish. The present pastor, Father Francis Kula, has been working since 1957 to make St. Anthony's a stable, self-sustaining parish.

Although the church was built in 1912, the Polish settlement dates from 1900. The first group of Polish immigrants to attempt farming in the area included Francis and Vincent Kutrowski, Adalbert Niejedły, John Wiater, Lawrence Moneta, Nicholas Malinowski and Joseph Kelner. They found a country heavily wooded, trackless and virgin except for a few narrow trails. They considered themselves fortunate that Whitemouth, the nearest railway station and their provision center, was only six miles distant. For many years, they toted their supplies from the village to their log shacks.

As in many other mission parishes, the future of this parish looks bleak. The young people are seeking better opportunities in the city while the pioneers

ST. ANTHONY'S CHURCH — ELMA

are passing on. Thus farms which took a lifetime to develop are abandoned to become overgrown with weeds and bush, and perhaps to return to their primitive state.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHAPEL — HADASHVILLE

The Hadashville post office, located about thirteen miles south of Elma, is named after a Pole. About ten Polish immigrant families settled in the area in 1905. The following year Father Greczel visited them from Winnipeg. Later, they received the visits of Father Polaska from Beausejour. In the interval between the priests' calls, they attended Mass at Whitemouth.

Father Nandzik suggested to them that they build a church of their own and when Father Kowalski took charge of the mission, he persuaded them to act on this suggestion. And so, in 1916, they erected a chapel which, with the exception of the addition of a sacristy and a few minor improvements, stands today as it was then.

The building of this chapel was approached as a great undertaking. The plan was discussed long and thoroughly, the various tasks were assigned, and finally every one helped in the building. When Archbishop Beliveau came to bless the new church, he found a little mission chapel like countless others in the province. It stood on land donated by Peter Medyński, and was built by a carpenter named John Ostry. In 1938, the Poles at Hadasville built a small

meeting hall, the construction of which was also a true community effort ⁶⁶.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH — WHITEMOUTH

St. Augustine's church at Whitemouth is an old building, which the French and English settlers erected as a dwelling in 1885, with the upper storey set aside for a chapel. After being remodelled in 1907 for exclusive use as a church, it was blessed by Father Kulawy.

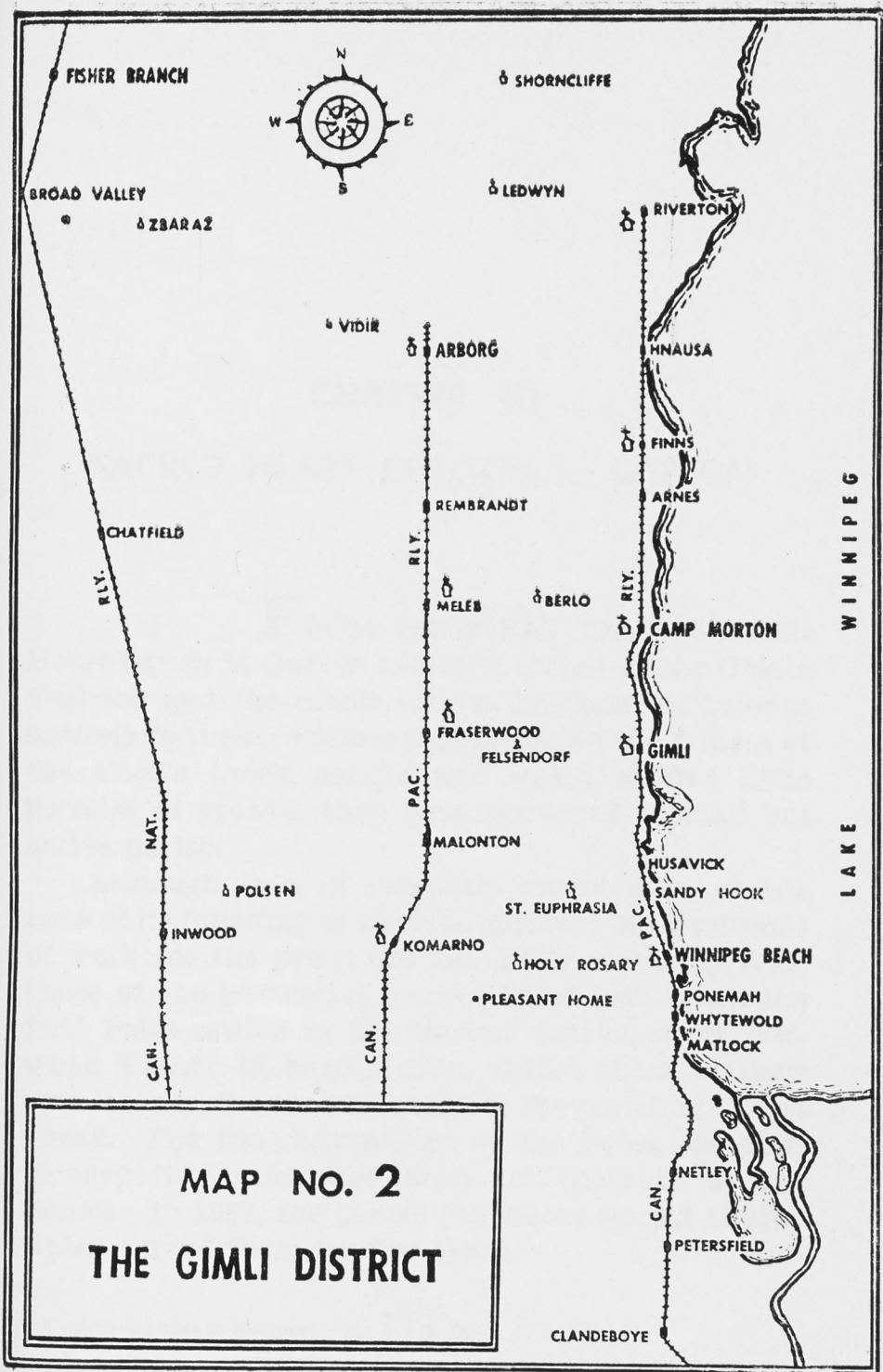
About 1910, due to the difficult conditions in the district, the French settlers left. The first Poles who settled there in 1898, were then joined by more of their compatriots on the homesteads which were mostly in swampy land. Only by dint of hard work was the land drained and made arable. It was divided, in the French fashion, into parcels one quarter of a mile wide and one mile long, each with a frontage on the Whitemouth River. Although settlers lived on both banks, there was only one trail for the whole area, and this was passable only when the ground froze in the winter. As there were no bridges, in the summer, rafts were used to cross the river to reach the store or the post office.

The settlers could clear at most one or two acres of land a year, as in the summer months they were forced to work out to earn a living. Some relief came when the Grand Trunk Pacific built a railroad six miles nearer the farms than was the Canadian Pacific Railway at the time. Then cordwood took on value.

The Poles knew the district by three names: the post office was Janow, named after the Polish storekeeper and postmaster; the Grand Trunk Railway station was Elma, and the school district was Kelner ⁶⁷.

Although the settlement was predominantly French and English in the early days, Father Kulawy included it on his itinerary. After the French left, the church stood vacant for three years until, in 1913, Archbishop Langevin gave it to the Poles. As it was near the river which flooded occasionally, they moved the building to higher ground near the main road. Later they enlarged it, covered it with a new roof, and added a sacristy and a choirloft, until it presented a neat appearance.

Fathers Greczel, Sztojer, Nandzik and Margos served the mission regularly. All the priests who were in charge of the church at Elma also took care of the Whitemouth mission. In 1927 and 1928, Father A. D'Eschambault, a diocesan priest of French origin⁶⁸, ministered to the Poles there as the earlier Polish missionaries had served the French.



CHAPTER XI

SACRED HEART CHURCH — GARSON

FROM ITS FIRST DAYS, SACRED Heart parish at Garson has been served by the Oblate Fathers, and the credit for its development belongs entirely to them. From a population on the fringes of the Cook's Creek parish, and which showed little promise of growth, they have fashioned a small but active parish.

Although it is of relatively recent date, at the time of its founding in the late 'thirties, the conditions of work for the priest did not differ markedly from those of the pioneering years. From 1909, when the first Poles settled in the Garson district, until 1936, when Father Richard Kosian visited them in their own locality, the area belonged to the parish at Cook's Creek. For the convenience of the Poles, the missionary first celebrated Mass for them in private homes. In 1937, the people purchased an old church which served them for five years.

When Father J. Kucharczyk became the first resident pastor in 1942, he directed the building of a new church with a seating capacity of about two hundred. Archbishop Cabana blessed it on April 6, 1944, and Father Stanley Prokop completed the interior and decorated it when he succeeded Father Kucharczyk in 1945.

For eight years, Father Prokop tended the parish with great devotion. After the completion of the church, his objective was to build a new rectory to replace the diminutive cabin in which he lived. The handsome, convenient and well-planned house which he built, does credit to the parish.

Father Prokop's successor, Father Mieczysław Węcki, put the finishing touches to the rectory and continued the good work begun by his predecessors. When Father Casimir J. Holick took charge of the parish in 1954, he found good parish buildings and a debt which was not excessive.

MISSIONS OF GARSON

The pastor of the Sacred Heart church at Garson also serves the mission chapels at Tyndall and Walkleyburg. St. John the Baptist chapel at Tyndall was built in 1940 when Father L. Sajek, then pastor at Beausejour, visited the mission. Today, the small church serves about thirty families, the first of whom arrived in the district in 1915.

St. Theresa's church at Walkleyburg was also built about the same time. Father A. D'Eschambault,

who was in charge of the mission from 1932 to 1940, began the construction of the chapel in 1938. Father Stanley Prokop completed it during his pastorate. The first of the fifteen families who make up the congregation today settled in the area in 1920 ⁶⁹.

CHAPTER XII

ST. STANISLAS CHURCH — EAST SELKIRK

WHEN THE TOWNSITE FOR EAST Selkirk was surveyed in 1876, the general belief prevailed that it would one day become the capital of Manitoba. This opinion was based on the assumption that the main crossing of the Red River by the Canadian Pacific Railway would be at Selkirk. When the railroad crossed the river at Winnipeg, all the dreams for the bright future of the village of Selkirk vanished.

Consequently, the roundhouse which was built at East Selkirk in 1879 from stone quarried at Tyndall became superfluous, and served in turn as railway station, dance hall, schoolhouse, hospital and church. Finally, in 1899, it was turned to use as an immigration hall, through which thousands of immigrants passed daily. Not only the Polish immigrants who settled around Selkirk in 1897 were cleared through this hall, but also those destined for other parts of Manitoba.

Until 1935, the only crossing from the east to the west shore of the river was by ferry. One family, who arrived at East Selkirk in 1904 have a vivid recollection of the ferry. The husband, the wife and their two children, who were on their way to Winnipeg Beach, detrained at Selkirk with their shapeless bundles. When they took the ferry to cross the river, they found that they had only ten cents to their name. This they paid for the crossing and took to the railway track and walked to Winnipeg Beach, carrying their children and their bundles.

Although the Oblate Fathers intermittently visited the Polish settlers around East Selkirk, these Poles actually belonged to the parish of Cook's Creek. In 1912, however, Father Andrew Sztojer built a log-chapel in their locality, and priests celebrated Mass there a few times a year. Fathers Sztojer, Grochowski, Greczel, Kowalski, Nandzik and Heintze served the Poles until 1924.

For sixteen years, thereafter, Father Antoine D'Eschambault, who had visited Poland and had learned the Polish language, took charge of the missions of East Selkirk, Narol, Walkleyburg and Libau. When, in 1940, Archbishop Yelle again entrusted East Selkirk to the Oblate Fathers, Father Stanley Prokop became the first resident pastor.

In 1937, under Father D'Eschambault's direction a larger church was built to replace the original log building. For a rectory, however, Father Prokop rented a small house which his successors occupied until 1948. The present rectory was erected in 1949 by Father Golecki. Fathers Auguste Michalik and

ST. STANISLAS CHURCH — EAST SELKIRK

Richard Latusek followed Father Prokop as pastors, while Father Golecki was succeeded by Fathers Felix Kwiatkowski, Albert Pilikowski and Joseph Cieply, the present pastor. Each in turn has added improvements to the parish buildings, which not only benefit the parish but raise its prestige ⁷⁰.

CORPUS CHRISTI CHAPEL — NAROL

Just as the Poles had drifted in 1897 to land plots north and south of Winnipeg on the west bank of the Red River, so they also found their way north of the city on the east bank. Joseph and Charles Husarski, Wacław, Adalbert and Anthony Wachal, Gregory Szajewski, John Hoc, Frank and Michael Oleschuk, Frank and John Gusnoski, Joseph and John Onhauser and Frank Tomczak were among the first Polish settlers here. The wife of the first postmaster gave the village of Narol its name. Separated from her birthplace in Poland by thousands of miles of land and sea, she assuaged her homesickness by naming the post office after her native village. When these Poles arrived, land was selling for \$3.00 to \$6.00 an acre. In 1909, it was \$35.00 to \$50.00 an acre ⁷¹.

The two Fathers Kulawy were the first priests to visit the Poles at Narol. In 1902, a piece of land was bought for a church, construction of which began two years later, and was completed in 1906. A few years later Father Sztojer replaced the original building, while in 1939, the present church was erected and was completed by Father Prokop.

This chapel, located near the city, has always been easily accessible for the Fathers from the Holy Ghost parish. Except in 1912, when Father Joseph Solski celebrated Mass there on his arrival in Winnipeg, the Oblate Fathers have continuously served it. On the establishment of a parish in East Selkirk in 1940, Narol was attached to the parish as a chaplaincy.

PART IV

THE GIMLI DISTRICT

THE GIMLI DISTRICT DERIVES ITS historic name from the colony of Icelanders, the first settlers in this district. In 1875, they started the first permanent Icelandic settlement in Canada. For ten years, they lived under a system of self-government on a tract of land twelve miles wide and stretching for thirty miles along the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Not until 1885 was the Gimli settlement thrown open to other nationals ⁷².

Geographically, the Gimli District is bounded on the east by Lake Winnipeg, on the south by an imaginary line running from Petersfield to Inwood, then north along the Canadian National Railway Company's right-of-way to Fisher Branch and, thence, east through Shorncliffe to the lakeshore. This is not to imply that no Poles settled beyond this territory, but simply that they built their churches within this area.

THE GIMLI DISTRICT

Poles began to settle in this region in 1897. Dominic Cherniak, J. Rech, Joseph Kretowski, Roch Pawulski, Michael Ciszewski and John Pemkowski were among the first arrivals. They came by way of Teulon, where the railroad ended at the time, and took homesteads in the Pleasant Home district. Others came by boat to Gimli and settled west of the Icelandic colony. Then every year new groups of immigrants took up land in the area until, side by side with other nationals, there were Poles in every corner of the Gimli District. An observer estimated that, in 1909, four hundred Polish families lived in the district⁷³. Today, such Polish place-names as Komarno, Okno, Jaroslaw and Zbaraz testify to the country of origin of these people.

The plight of these simple settlers, here as elsewhere, was pitiable. They left their destitute and overcrowded homeland to find here a land almost entirely uninhabited and abounding in forests and swamps. They arrived nearly penniless, as the sale of their small holdings in Poland hardly yielded enough to pay for their passage to Canada. All their worldly possessions were contained in the non-descript bundles which they carried. With these and a fierce determination to succeed by the work of their hands, they began their new life in Manitoba.

They were a lonely people. In their native villages, they had spent their life in the familiar circle of relatives and friends. Here, the trackless forest and swampland cut them off from daily companionship even with their neighbors. Only their deep attachment to the soil and the challenge of

this impenetrable forest spurred them to remain and to face the unknown future. In their mind, they saw the woods bending under their axe and becoming rich grainfields. But the bitter labor of making the dream a reality consumed the better part of their lifetime.

They attacked the forest with an axe and hopefully cultivated the first clearings with spade and hoe. To add to the burden of this life of unrelieved hardships, the swamps bred swarms of mosquitoes to harass them day and night. Because of their sacrifices, never will similar conditions of life be known in this district.

Today, the three Polish priests who reside in this region serve sixteen churches. The three parishes have taken on a permanent character because of the presence of a Sisters' convent in each. At Arborg, the little parish literally grew up around the Mother-house of the Benedictine Sisters. The same is true of the parish at Gimli, where the Sisters of the same Community conduct a hospital. While at Camp Morton, the arrival of the Sisters of Service furnished the occasion for founding a parish. Not only the parishes, but the entire communities have benefited by the work of the Sisters.

Besides the churches whose history is outlined in the following pages, there stood at one time chapels at Okno, Chatfield, Broad Valley and Morweena. Today, none of these chapels exist.

CHAPTER XIII

ST. BENEDICT'S CHURCH — CAMP MORTON

THE STORY OF ST. BENEDICT'S Parish at Camp Morton begins with the chapel of St. Anthony, built by the Poles and Germans in 1906, when the district was known as Faxe. Today, this chapel stands unused two miles west of Camp Morton.

Martin Keller and Adam Haas were in the vanguard of the colony of settlers who sought homesteads in this region in 1900. The latter, as postmaster, gave his name to the post office when it was opened in 1904. The former gave an acre of land at Haas for a church site, on which St. Anthony's chapel was built and where Father Sztojer offered the first Mass. Because Poles and Germans made up the settlement, both Polish and German priests ministered to them.

As more immigrants penetrated north and west of Haas, in 1908, they built a church in their own neighborhood at Berlo. This small chapel, constructed

of tamarack logs, locked with wooden dowels, is a good specimen of the pioneers' craftsmanship. Today, the mission counts only a few Poles in its small German congregation.

The purchase, in 1920, of a property at Faxe for a summer camp for Catholic children not only changed the name of the locality but also hastened the establishment of a parish. When Monsignor Morton opened the children's camp in 1923, Archbishop Sinnott built a church and a rectory in the neighborhood. The following year, after the arrival of the Sisters of Service, he established a parish there.

It was a parish in name only. In reality, it was one of a group of mission chapels, singled out for development as a future parish. Father W. J. Maciaszek, a newly ordained priest, took charge of the Polish and German congregation, as their first resident pastor.

The unfinished church gave so little protection against the winter cold that the men did not remove their caps during church services. But before Christmas of 1924, they lined the interior of the church with heavy building paper so that on Christmas morning, the small congregation assisted at the three Masses in comparative comfort, huddled together on planks set on crates around the camp stove. It was the first time since leaving Europe some twenty years earlier, that they assisted at Mass on Christmas Day.

To the delight of the congregation, the pastor also held the Holy Week services for them, as well as May devotions. But the festive occasion came on

June 13, St. Anthony's day, when thirty-nine children made their first Holy Communion. The Sisters of Service had prepared the children thoroughly, and Father Hilland preached sermons in English and German to a large gathering of people from the parish, from Gimli and from Winnipeg Beach.

Following Father Maciaszek's departure from Camp Morton in November of 1925, the parish remained vacant for a year. In the interim, Fathers Hilland, Twardochleb, Nandzik and Puchniak, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, served the parish. During this interval, on June 13, 1926, the church was blessed and dedicated to St. Anthony, patron of the old chapel at Haas ⁷⁴.

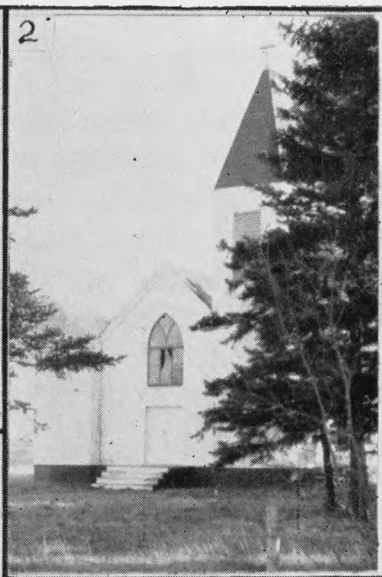
After a year of this interim ministry, the people gladly received Father August Forner, as their resident pastor. For seven years, Father Forner unobtrusively went about his ministry in the parish and at Winnipeg Beach, at Sandy Hook and at Gimli. He left Camp Morton shortly after the fire, which destroyed the parish church on January 29, 1933 ⁷⁵.

Faced with the necessity of rebuilding the church at Camp Morton with the least possible delay, on April 23, 1933, Archbishop Sinnott appointed Father L. J. Kręciszewski to the parish. This zealous missionary set to work so energetically that on September 3, the church was ready for the blessing.

A great throng assembled for Mass that Sunday morning. Many remained on the church grounds until the time of the blessing at five o'clock in the afternoon. Archbishop Sinnott officiated at the ceremony, assisted by Father Solski as Deacon and Father



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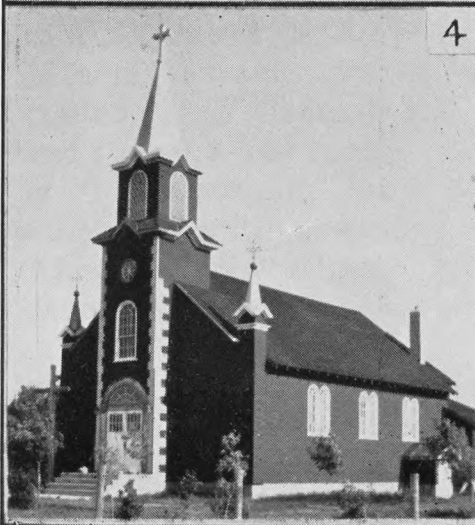
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1. Sacred Heart Church, Komarno
2. St. Euphrasia Church, Sandy Hook
3. Holy Rosary Chapel, Winnipeg Beach
4. Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church, Felsendorf
5. Sacred Heart Church, Garson
6. St. Anthony Church, Rackham

Sylla as Sub-deacon. He also preached the sermon to the vast gathering and gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The presence of twenty priests and a choir made up of Benedictine Sisters from Arborg, raised the solemnity of the occasion. The Archbishop dedicated the church to St. Benedict, in recognition of the work of the Benedictine Sisters in the Archdiocese, and especially at the children's camp ⁷⁶.

The interest in the church, which Father Kręszewski awakened in the people, ebbed through the month of Father Andrew Wiśniewski's stay at Camp Morton, but rose again when Father Jerome Podbielski became pastor.

For nine years, Father Podbielski sustained that interest. They were years of steady improvement. In 1935, he built a parish hall. Three years later, a tower was erected for the bell, and in 1942, thanks to a bequest from the Dougherty estate, Archbishop Sinnott was able to send workmen to renovate the church: they stuccoed the exterior of the building and gave it a new facade. The new windows, especially the Monsignor Blair Memorial window in the sanctuary, added a reverent atmosphere to the church. When Father Podbielski left in 1944, St. Benedict's church had changed beyond recognition.

The present pastor, Father Joseph Sieczkowski, has now been at his post for sixteen years. In those years, he has given to his parish and his five missions, his undivided attention. He has built chapels at Fraserwood and at Finns and has kept all the buildings in good repair.

ST. BENEDICT'S CHURCH — CAMP MORTON

The celebration only eleven years ago of the 25th anniversary of the parish at Camp Morton, brings to mind its recent establishment. But in spite of the sacrifices of the priests, the parish shows little sign of growth for the future, as the young generation leaves the district to seek better opportunities elsewhere. The pastor, however, continues to visit the chapels at Felsendorf, Meleb, Finns, Fraserwood and Berlo, expending time and energy for the spiritual welfare of the diminishing congregations.

SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS CHURCH — FELSENDORF

Fifty years ago, Ss. Cyril and Methodius' church was the center of the spiritual life of the Poles in the entire Gimli District. And during the eight years when the priest resided there, it was the headquarters for all missionary activity in the region. As the first Polish church in the District, the settlers even on the remote homesteads, knew it well and frequented it. Today all trace of its former importance has vanished.

The first Poles to penetrate the woods and to take homesteads in the swamps west of Gimli in 1897, waited four years for the first visit of a priest. That Father John Kulawy baptized thirty-four children during his three days' stay in February of 1901 indicates that a priest's visit was overdue.

On his advice, the following year a group of men (Peter Medar, John Rech, Thomas Żuk, Thomas Stan-

ST. BENEDICT'S CHURCH — CAMP MORTON

kowski, Maciej Obacz, Wojciech Szląszka, and Martin Rojewski) undertook to build a church in their neighborhood. Because the work of cutting the trees and hauling them to the building site was done by hand, it was not until 1904 that a simple log structure, measuring twenty-five feet by fifty-six, took shape. Only the steeple surmounted by a cross distinguished it from a large loghouse and gave it a remote resemblance to a church. Ss. Cyril and Methodius were chosen as its patron saints.

This accomplishment so delighted the people that, when Father Francis Kowalski visited them in 1904, they sent a petition to Archbishop Langevin, begging him to appoint a resident priest to their church⁷⁷. Although pleased with their request, the Archbishop was unable to accede to it at once. But he promised to do so as soon as possible. Polish priests in Manitoba at the time were few in number.

The Oblate Fathers were the first itinerant missionaries in the Gimli District, but it fell to a diocesan priest, Father Ernest Kostorz, to endure the hardships of residing in this undeveloped area. When he became pastor of Ss. Cyril and Methodius church on July 31, 1905, he shared all the hardships of his parishioners. Isolated in his shabby log house, exposed to the severe winter cold, he was the only priest in this vast territory. Contacts with the outside were difficult, as the nearest railroad station was at Winnipeg Beach.

But his labors bore fruit, for on arrival he found seventeen families in the parish, but before he

departed in April of 1907, he had rallied seventy-seven families about the church.

When the Oblate Fathers again took charge of the district, Fathers Kowalski, Andrew Sztojer, and Leonard Nandzik in turn visited the missions, until April 18, 1909, when Father Sztojer served it uninterruptedly for a period of a year. During his administration a misfortune befell the colony at Gimli ⁷⁸.

Preparations were made to observe the patronal feast of the church on July 7. People from the district walked eight, ten and even fifteen miles to attend the celebration of the feast. The congregation from Our Lady of the Scapular chapel at Husavick, seven miles to the south, marched in procession to take part in the festivities. Led by a cross bearer, banners fluttering in the wind, singing hymns, they waded unceremoniously through the swamps which hindered their progress.

What was their consternation on arrival at the churchyard, when they found a heap of smouldering ashes where the church had stood. The singing ceased, and the women fell to weeping and lamenting at the dismal sight. As the building was not insured and the parish owed \$200 in debt, the loss was a heavy blow.

That day the priest celebrated Mass for the desolate congregation at a makeshift altar set outdoors against the rectory wall, while the smoke still rose from the rubble.

This blow, however, did not dismay the pioneers. Under Father Sztojer's guidance, they set to work and built a larger church, measuring this time thirty

feet by sixty-six. When the plight of the mission was published in the *Gazeta Katolicka*, contributions for the new church came from places as distant as Montreal and Texas ⁷⁹.

In the fall of 1910, the parish again received a diocesan priest as pastor, Father Titus Wojnowski. Besides his new parish, he had charge of the chapels at Husavick, Pleasant Home, Berlo and Haas. He exhausted his energies in the service of his people, and left Gimli broken in health.

A noteworthy event in the district was the first pastoral visitation of Archbishop Langevin on July 6, 1911. Father Wojnowski planned to instruct the children of each mission in Christian Doctrine in preparation for the Archbishop's visit. But at the last moment, illness brought him down and his plans went to naught.

Father Ladislas Grochowski, an Oblate Father from Winnipeg, was obliged to precede the Archbishop to Gimli and to take charge of the preparations. On the eve of the Confirmation day, he gathered the children from the surrounding missions at Gimli, where he hurriedly prepared them for the reception of first Holy Communion and of Confirmation.

Although fifteen years had passed since most of the settlers had established themselves in the region, they still vividly remembered the visit of a Bishop to a parish in their homeland. In Poland, the respect paid to the Bishop was equal to that accorded to royalty. There was no sign that this deep respect had diminished among the people of Ss. Cyril and

Methodius parish. They made elaborate plans to welcome their Archbishop becomingly.

On July 5, from miles around, people converged on the Gimli church. A feeling of excitement and expectation ran through the crowd as they waited.

At last, the time came. About seven o'clock in the evening, the Archbishop arrived at the Gimli railroad station. A cavalcade of horsemen and a convoy of wagons awaited him there. On the station platform, Father Grochowski publicly welcomed the Archbishop. Then a procession formed and led the distinguished guest to the church five miles away.

An eye-witness gives the following account of the procession ⁸⁰. J. Koch headed the procession on his bicycle. Then followed Fathers Grochowski and Nandzik in a buggy. Behind them, rode the six men on horseback, decked out in bright Polish costumes, followed by a buggy bearing the Archbishop and the visiting priests. Finally, four wagons, pitching and jolting on the rough trail, clattered along in the rear, with the other guests and the Holy Ghost Choir from Winnipeg. While the procession moved along slowly on that calm July evening, swarms of mosquitoes attacked it mercilessly.

The faithful awaiting the arrival of their Archbishop, met him a half a mile from the church. The cortege from the station halted; a senior member of the parish, in a symbolic gesture of welcome, presented the traditional bread and salt to the Archbishop; a salvo was fired from rifles and shotguns; the Archbishop blessed the faithful and the entire procession proceeded to the church.

On arrival at the churchyard, the Archbishop went into the rectory to prepare for the blessing of the church which followed later that evening.

Next morning, the priests began hearing confessions at five o'clock. The Archbishop read a low Mass at which thirty boys and twenty-eight girls received first Holy Communion. Then followed a Solemn High Mass in the presence of the Archbishop, who confirmed one hundred and sixty-three persons.

To conclude the successful day, in the evening, at the rectory, the Holy Ghost Choir entertained the Archbishop with Polish hymns and folk-songs, and Father Wojnowski made an eloquent speech in Latin. The next day the Archbishop celebrated Mass at four o'clock in the morning and left for the station two hours later.

Father Wojnowski's condition proved to be more serious than appeared, for on July 10, Father Camillus Grzybała, also a diocesan priest, came to Gimli first to help the sick pastor and then to replace him. Father Grzybała was the third and the last resident priest at Gimli.

Not only did he experience the primitive conditions of life, but his ministry was hampered by no less than five individuals roaming the district and posing as priests or even bishops. They were immigrants from Russia or the Ukraine, whose sole aim was to confuse the people and to obstruct the work of the Church. This proselytizing emanated from Teulon, where a Protestant sect had established its headquarters. Some of its starry-eyed zealots labored under the misconception that merely to

inform the European immigrants of the existence of a newer religion would be sufficient to separate them from the Catholic Church ⁸¹.

After his departure on January 27, 1913, for an interval of eight years, Ss. Cyril and Methodius ceased to exist not only as a parish but also as a mission. In 1911, lightning struck the church and the ensuing fire completely destroyed it. Although the church was insured, it was not rebuilt until 1921.

The new chapel was no longer a rallying point for the Catholics of the whole district but served only those living in the immediate vicinity. Priests from Arborg and from Winnipeg visited it, until in 1924 it became a chaplaincy attached to the newly formed parish at Camp Morton.

A recent occurrence of importance to the Church was the celebration, on May 27, 1956, of a first Solemn Mass by Father Stanley Jaworski, then newly ordained. After fifty years, the little mission gave a priest to the Church.

OTHER MISSIONS OF CAMP MORTON

The numerous chapels attached to the Polish rural parishes make of the pastor a travelling missionary. Moreover, these mission chapels, where Mass is celebrated only at intervals, always have about them a provisional character. The mission of Our Lady of Mercy at Finns is a typical instance: twice the name and the location of the chapel were changed.

The first chapel, initiated in 1914 by Stanley

Borkowski, Francis Kowal, Francis Rudnicki and Stanislas Orzech, was located about eight miles west of Arnes. When Father Sztojer blessed it on December 8, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, he referred to it as the Rembrandt chapel⁸².

In 1928, despite bitter opposition by some, the chapel was moved to a site two miles nearer the hamlet of Arnes. Badly damaged in transit, the building was useless in the winter months. A donor offered \$100 to repair the foundations of the chapel on condition that its name be changed to St. Edward. Thus, on May 10, 1931, Archbishop Sinnott blessed the chapel at its new site under the new title.

Besides being in poor structural condition, the chapel stood in a particularly inaccessible location. The priest could reach it from Arnes only by sled or wagon, depending on the season of the year.

First, Archbishop Sinnott, then Archbishop Murray advised the people to build a new church near the main road. They paid no heed. Then, on April 1, 1949, Father Sieczkowski started work on a new church at Finns. Only with great difficulty did he complete it. And when Archbishop Murray blessed it on August 28, 1949, he dedicated the chapel and the mission to Our Lady of Mercy.

Another chapel which stands as a monument to Father Sieczkowski's patience and perseverance is the trim white chapel at the eastern approach to the village of Fraserwood. This chapel became a necessity when the Poles of the district were denied the use of the Greek Catholic church which they had helped to build in 1930. The Greek Catholic chapel still

bears testimony to this unsuccessful attempt at cooperation: both a Latin and an Oriental rite cross adorn its roof.

From 1937 to 1941, Father Lewandowski celebrated Mass for the Poles twice a year in the Fraserwood chapel which served both congregations. Then for a year Father Sieczkowski assembled the Poles there every second month, and later every month. Finally relations became strained, and to keep peace among the Slavs, Father Sieczkowski built the present church, in spite of the numerous obstacles which were put in his way. Archbishop Pocock blessed the completed chapel on July 24, 1954.

The first Poles homesteaded in the region between Fraserwood and Malonton only in 1915. Joseph Siatecki, Anthony Jabłoński and John Malski at first attended Mass at Felsendorf. Later the Poles planned a church at Malonton. But instead they were persuaded to build jointly with the Greek Catholics, a venture which ended in the Poles having no church of their own.

Fortunately discord is not the rule between Catholics of the Latin and those of the Oriental Rite. They demonstrated this at Meleb in May of 1950, when they observed in exemplary harmony the 50th anniversary of their settlement in the district.

The Poles built their chapel at Meleb in 1917, under the direction of Father Richard Kosian. When Archbishop Sinnott blessed it on September 29, 1918, he gave it the title of St. Michael, to compliment the men who built it, many of whom bore the name of the mighty Archangel ⁸³.

CHAPTER XIV

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH — GIMLI

THE CHAPEL WHICH ARCHBISHOP Sinnott built in Gimli in 1940, and which Archbishop Murray blessed on July 27, 1944, finds a place in this study because of the part the Polish priests and people have taken in its development. It is not numbered as one of the Polish churches.

Before 1940, the few Catholics living in or near the town attended either the chapel at Felsendorf or the church at Camp Morton. The possibility of opening a parish at Gimli arose when the Benedictine Sisters opened a hospital in the village in 1939. Since the Sisters required a priest to serve as chaplain, Archbishop Sinnott also erected a small church, where the priest could celebrate Mass for the few resident Catholics and the summer visitors. The Catholic Church Extension Society provided the money to start the building.

The beginnings of the mission were gloomy. The

Sisters accommodated the first priest, Father Lucien Sociński, in a small room at the hospital entrance. In the fall of 1940, Father Charles Łukasik succeeded Father Sociński, but seeing the primitive state of the mission, he left after six months. In spite of the disheartening conditions, when Father W. J. Holloway became chaplain and pastor in 1941, he remained at his post until his retirement in November of 1955.

He saw the parish grow from a mere handful of Catholics, when he celebrated Mass in the church for five or six persons, to its present promising condition, when the average Sunday congregation numbers more than a hundred persons. This growth came about slowly and painfully.

At first the few summer residents joined the small local congregation. The opening of the RCAF Station at Gimli in 1943 gave the parish, as well as the town, a vital boost. Little by little the number of Catholics increased: some moved into the town from the district, some were Catholic RCAF personnel or employees who sought homes in the town. Today, the parish numbers over fifty families, half of them of Polish descent.

Because of the diverse ethnic groups represented among the Catholics, it is apparent that a priest speaking Polish can give fuller service both in the parish and in the hospital. Father Joseph Sieczkowski, pastor of Camp Morton, was almost indispensable in helping Father Holloway in his ministry to the Poles and others who spoke no English.

After Father Holloway's retirement, none of the four priests who successively had charge of the parish,

could inaugurate any long range plan for its improvement. Father Martin Szawerna, a Polish Franciscan of the Friars Minor, Fathers Albert Bertsch and Joseph May, Pallotine Fathers from Swan River, and finally Father Wacław Pluciński, a diocesan priest newly arrived in the Archdiocese, each administered the parish for a few months.

When the writer was appointed to Gimli on December 12, 1956, the scope of his work was extended to include the care of Our Lady of the Lake parish at Winnipeg Beach and its dependent missions. Today, St. Michael's church has reached the stage where it must undergo major alterations, if it is to serve the parish needs adequately. The future development of the parish will depend on the facilities provided for divine worship and for a parochial social life. The Catholics attending St. Michael's church have shown their willingness to bring these improvements about, by organizing a parish campaign in 1959 to finance an expansion program.

OUR LADY OF THE LAKE CHURCH — WINNIPEG BEACH ⁸⁴

The fine beach and the delightful scenery at the summer resort which was opened in 1902 on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg, immediately attracted throngs of vacationists from the city of Winnipeg. Since the Catholics among them belonged to St. Mary's church, the Oblate Fathers from that parish visited the resort to celebrate Mass for their vacationing parishioners.

When it became apparent that a more permanent place than the homes of the Catholics was required for offering Mass, they built a chapel. Although Father Arthur Labonte dedicated the chapel to the Most Holy Redeemer on July 15, 1911, a few years later, Father Frederick O'Donnell changed the title to Our Lady of the Lake, the title under which the church is known today. To accommodate the priest who visited the chapel every Sunday in the summer months, Father O'Donnell built a cottage beside the church in 1917.

But after establishing the chapel at Winnipeg Beach, the Oblate Fathers left it to the care of the diocesan clergy when St. Mary's became the Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg in 1918. Thereafter, with few exceptions, diocesan priests have served Our Lady of the Lake chapel.

With the founding, in 1924, of St. Anthony's parish at Camp Morton where a priest took up residence, Winnipeg Beach became a permanent mission of the new parish. This was also the initial step in rallying the Polish population of the district around the church at the Beach.

The better to accommodate the growing congregation at Winnipeg Beach, in 1928, the priest began to celebrate two Sunday Masses during the summer season. But even this arrangement did not solve the problem of overcrowding at the Masses, and in 1929, the chapel was enlarged.

The third step in the development of Our Lady of the Lake church came in 1933 when Archbishop Sinnott assigned Father Kręciszewski, then pastor

at Camp Morton, to prepare the cottage at Winnipeg Beach for a resident priest. With a substantial gift from the Catholic Church Extension Society, Father Kręciszewski remodelled the summer cottage and made it weather proof for winter dwelling. Even before the priest's residence was ready for occupancy, Father Stephen Buszka received the appointment as first resident pastor of Our Lady of the Lake church, where he served the thirty-five local families, the summer congregations and the three missions, for one year.

Archbishop Sinnott's observations, recorded in the parish register, give some idea of the condition of the parish at the time.

"This 5th day of August 1934, I made my first pastoral visit to Our Lady of the Lake Church at Winnipeg Beach. After High Mass at 11 o'clock, celebrated by the pastor, Reverend Stephen Buszka, I administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 63 persons, of whom several were adults.

"The church was crowded beyond its capacity and many were unable to gain admittance.

"Father Buszka has done very good work in this parish. He is the first pastor and, as the people had been so long abandoned, he has many difficulties in bringing the people to a realization of what Catholic life really means. The children were very well instructed today, answering all questions readily. The Sisters of Service from Camp Morton have been teaching catechism here for several weeks. The good work they did was evidenced in the behaviour of the

children and in their knowledge of Christian Doctrine...”

During the five years following Father Buszka's departure, Winnipeg Beach became alternately a mission and a parish. Through the winter months, the parish remained vacant, but in 1935, Father Jerome Podbielski served it from Camp Morton. After Father M. Lewandowski resided there for a few years, Father Bernard Niesłony, a Vincentian Father residing at Petersfield, visited Our Lady of the Lake church as a mission.

This interrupted and casual ministry came to an end with Father Lucien Sociński's arrival at Winnipeg Beach in 1939, as the third resident pastor. In turn, Fathers Joseph Sieczkowski (1942 to 1944) and Francis Stróżewski (1944 to 1952) cared for the growing parish.

In 1952, Our Lady of the Lake church seemed to have gone the full circle when the writer, then residing at St. Mary's rectory in Winnipeg, became administrator of the resort parish and its mission chapels. As in the early days, the priest travelled from Winnipeg to minister to the spiritual needs of the faithful at Winnipeg Beach.

A further change took place on December 7, 1956, when Our Lady of the Lake church became a mission of St. Michael's church at Gimli where the writer was sent as missionary.

Although spiritual progress has not perhaps kept pace with the material improvements at Our Lady of the Lake parish, there is hope that with the new



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1. Precious Blood Church, Fraserwood
2. Our Lady of Mercy Church, Finns
3. Ss. Peter and Paul, Berlo — the original chapel
4. St. Anthony, Camp Morton — the original chapel
5. St. Isidore Church, Vita

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH — GIMLI

generation will come a better appreciation of the benefits of the Faith.

The constant growth of Winnipeg Beach as a popular summer resort, has attracted an increasing number of Catholics to the lakeside, either as weekend visitors or as summer residents. The two Masses which are celebrated from the first Sunday of June until the first Sunday of September are hardly adequate to accommodate the congregations, particularly during July and August. The average attendance during these months is five hundred persons a Sunday, and many must remain standing at the door or at the open windows.

Whereas, in the first years, parishioners from St. Mary's church in Winnipeg made up the congregation, in a recent survey it was found that members of twenty-two parishes were among the attendance.

Our Lady of the Lake church today claims the distinction of serving the largest Catholic summer congregation in any resort in the province of Manitoba and of Saskatchewan.

ST. EUPHRASIA CHAPEL — SANDY HOOK

The Poles who began to settle in the Husavick district in 1897 built a church in their own neighborhood when the people at Gimli were completing their church. Since the homestead of Roch Pawulski was the center of this settlement, he donated a large plot of land for the church, which became a mission of Gimli. On August 15, 1905, Father Ernest Kostorz

celebrated the first Mass in the new chapel, which was dedicated to Our Lady of the Scapular.

Until 1913, the little mission which counted thirty-seven families, received regular care from the pastor at Gimli. When Gimli in turn became a mission, Father Richard Kosian, the missionary from Arborg, offered Mass occasionally at Our Lady of the Scapular chapel. Then, for ten years, the people received only intermittent visits from Father Joseph Solski, pastor of St. John Cantius church in Winnipeg.

On his first pastoral visit to the mission, Archbishop Sinnott recorded the following observations:

"This 4th day of August 1921 We made Our first pastoral visit to this Mission of Our Lady of the Scapular. After the Mass celebrated at 10 o'clock, We administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to forty-one persons, children and adults.

"There are about 25 Polish families in this mission. There is a neat little church which was built about fourteen years ago. It is becomingly finished and supplied with everything necessary for divine worship.

"This morning the little church was crowded and practically all approached the Sacraments. There is no doubt of the sincere Catholic Faith of these people. For the last year or more, they have been without a pastor and without any chance of practising their religion, except for the occasional visit of Father Solski who, at great inconvenience to himself, has come here from time to time. We are grateful and pray God to bless him."

After the visits of Father Solski, the mission was almost abandoned until 1933, when the priest from Winnipeg Beach or from Camp Morton extended his care over it. In 1938, it became a center of some activity when a rectory was built at Husavick, a parish established and Father Lewandowski moved from Winnipeg Beach as pastor, with care of the chapels at Pleasant Home, Komarno and Polsen. He resided there until 1941.

In Holy Week of 1940, the log church burned down. Immediately, Father Lewandowski began building a new church which Father Sieczkowski completed.

To obtain funds for the work, an appeal was sent to the Convents of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, describing the plight of the mission which had lost its church by fire. The good Sisters responded generously and together with a gift from the Catholic Church Extension Society and some contributions from the parishioners, the new church was finished. Archbishop Murray blessed it on July 27, 1944, and put it under the patronage of St. Mary Euphrasia, foundress of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd ⁸⁵.

This chapel, built for the convenience of the pioneers, has outlived its usefulness. Good roads and the excellent means of travel allow every person to attend Mass every Sunday at Winnipeg Beach. There is less and less need today for the little chapels within short distances of the larger churches. Moreover, the lack of priests makes it imperative that people assemble, even at the cost of some inconvenience, wherever Mass is celebrated.

HOLY ROSARY CHAPEL — WINNIPEG BEACH

The Poles who built the Holy Rosary chapel in 1908 began settling in the Pleasant Home district, about eight miles west of Winnipeg Beach, ten years earlier. They were encouraged in their undertaking by the success of their neighbors who erected a chapel at Sandy Hook.

Nine years before the chapel was built, Father A. Kulawy visited the district. He celebrated the first Mass in the settlement and administered the first baptism.

As told by an old settler, these missionary trips into the country entailed endless discomfort and hardships. Before a visit to Pleasant Home, Father Kulawy first notified some parishioner by letter of the date of his arrival at Teulon. The parishioner would meet the priest at the railroad station, after walking the distance of twenty-odd miles from his home. Because the train arrived in the evening, they would spend the night at Teulon, and set out the next day on foot to the settler's homestead. In the summer, they sloshed through swamps waist-deep in water, warding off swarms of mosquitoes. In the winter, it was a long, lonesome trek through the deep pathless snow.

After the priest celebrated Mass for the neighbors, he visited other settlements. Mile after mile, he trod with his guide along the narrow trails cut through the bush by the surveyors, or through the ever present marsh. Thus the priest's visit sometime lasted two or three weeks.

Until recently, there stood a rough wooden cross on a natural ridge one mile north of the Holy Rosary chapel. This cross marked the spot where services were held outdoors before the chapels were built in this district.

The interest of the people in this chapel can be traced through the records they kept of their parish meetings. In the first years, they held their meetings annually. Later, they called them every two or three years. Today, hardly a parishioner attends the meetings. Perhaps the undue concern of the trustees with financial matters has directed the attention of the people away from the main purpose of the chapel. It is a safe conjecture that the congregation would have shown less interest in the chapel but for the cemetery which is located in the churchyard.

SACRED HEART CHAPEL — KOMARNO

When Frances Moskal wished to take her sick child to the doctor in Winnipeg, she first had to call on four or five neighbors to borrow money for the trip. Each neighbor loaned her a few cents until she had the sum of \$1.25. Such was the poverty of the first Poles who cleared land in the district around the present village of Komarno in 1900. About fifty Polish families lived in the wild swampy country, where no roads existed and where the railroad ended at Teulon, seven miles away.

In 1911, the Poles and the Ukrainians of the area built a church in the village of Komarno. At a public

meeting, they determined by vote the Rite of the church. The majority favored making it a church of the Latin Rite. Consequently, a Polish priest from Winnipeg, and later from Arborg, served it.

Six years after the building of the church, there was still a considerable debt on it. The people, therefore, agreed to give the church over to the Ukrainian Redemptorist Fathers who also assumed the debt. Father A. Delaere, who had transferred to the Greek Rite in 1906, conducted the transaction. He aimed to make Komarno a center for the Greek Catholics, as Arborg was at the time for the Poles⁸⁶. He succeeded well, for to this day, the Komarno district bears a marked Ukrainian character.

The Holy See granted permission to transfer the church to the Catholics of the Greek Rite, on condition that those of the Latin Rite be allowed to use it as often as they desired. Thus, on March 14, 1917, the church at Komarno became a Greek Catholic church, also used by the Poles.

At first, exemplary harmony reigned. With the passage of time, the terms of the transfer were forgotten and misunderstandings arose. The outcome was that, in 1944, the Poles and the few Slovak families — who settled in the district later — under the direction of Father Sieczkowski, built a chapel for their own use. On July 29, 1944, Archbishop Murray blessed this new chapel and dedicated it to the Sacred Heart.

Six miles west of Komarno and two miles north of the main road stands the chapel of the Assumption, hidden in the woods and abandoned since the Poles

left the Polsen district. Built in 1919 by Father Solski, then pastor in Winnipeg, its very beginnings were inauspicious, as a windstorm flattened the walls while the church was still in the process of construction.

Served until the late 'twenties by priests from Winnipeg, then by the pastor of Winnipeg Beach, it soon became apparent that the chapel had outlived its need. In 1958, on Archbishop Pocock's recommendation, it was given to the Catholics of Warren. Today, it only awaits the crew of workmen who will move it to its new location.

CHAPTER XV

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH — ARBORG

IF ARBORG TODAY IS NOT MERELY another out-of-the-way mission without a resident priest, it is because the Benedictine Sisters established their Motherhouse there. Since 1914, with the exception of an interval of three years, a priest has lived in Arborg to serve the Sisters, and the Catholics in the whole district have benefited.

When the Sisters bought land to found a convent and an orphanage, the Oblate Fathers also purchased a property. Father Sztojer, the first resident priest (1914 to 1916), was assisted by Father Nandzik in the care of the missions at Zbaraz, Meleb, Arnes, Icelandic River, Ledwyn, Shorncliffe and Rembrandt. When Father Richard Kosian became chaplain (1916 to 1919), he added Komarno to the number of his missions. Arborg, however, was developing as a center for the Poles, who had first settled in the area in 1911. But the Oblate Fathers soon left Arborg and

for two years Father Solski travelled from Winnipeg to hold services for the Sisters.

Not until Father I. E. Zielonka was appointed chaplain to the Sisters did the beginnings of a parish take shape. In 1931, with help from the Catholic Church Extension Society, a parish church was built and dedicated to St. Philip Neri. It was completed in slow stages and today a trim church stands at Arborg, providing a worthy place of worship. After Father Zielonka left Arborg, Fathers Francis Stroński and M. Lewandowski succeeded him for short periods of time. But when Father Anthony Łoziński became chaplain and parish priest, he served Arborg and the missions for seventeen years.

The eighteen families which make up the small compact Catholic community at Arborg may point with pride to their parish church. They must also be grateful to the Benedictine Sisters who have lightened the parish's financial burden by providing for the needs of the priest.

In contrast to the ten missions of former days, today four chapels are attached to Arborg, namely, those of Zbaraz, Ledwyn, Shorncliffe and more recently Riverton.

MISSIONS OF ARBORG

Even today, the church at Zbaraz is inaccessible in winter after a snowstorm and in summer after a heavy rain. What must have been its isolation fifty years ago when the first Poles settled there?

Father Camillus Grzybala paid the first visit to the district in 1912. Two years later the Poles built a church and placed it under the patronage of St. Anthony. Father Sztojer, then stationed at Arborg, blessed the chapel on November 21, 1915.

Here, as elsewhere, conditions were extremely difficult. The settlers obtained their supplies and provisions from Teulon, about sixty miles distant. The round trip took a week with a team of oxen. As roads were non-existent, the bush and swamps made travel an arduous and hazardous undertaking.

When the Polish immigrants took homesteads north of Arborg in the Shorncliffe and Ledwyn region, they were settling on the fringes of civilization. Only the hope that one day the swamps would be drained and that roads would be built, kept them on their land.

They began to plan for a church at Shorncliffe in 1914, two years after their arrival. They were far removed from a church in this hinterland. For reasons of economy, they first planned one church for the settlements at Shorncliffe and at Ledwyn. But when it came to selecting a site for the church, there were as many choices as there were families. Father Sztojer, therefore, advised that a chapel be built in each neighborhood.

The chapel of St. John the Baptist at Ledwyn was built in 1915, about ten years after the Poles arrived in the district. Father E. Kostorz, however, celebrated the first Mass for them in their homes in 1907.

Of the pioneer priests who served this chapel,

Father Grzybala is best remembered because he paid frequent visits to the settlement and because one of the pioneers saved his life.

On one of his trips from Gimli, Father Grzybala arrived at Ledwyn early on Sunday morning before the people had assembled for Mass. Tired after his trip, he stopped to rest in an abandoned shack. The fire he lighted in the heater to keep warm almost proved fatal. While he slept, the shack caught fire and only the chance passing of a farmer who dragged the priest to safety saved Father Grzybala's life⁸⁷.

Since 1952, Father Francis Bielicki has been enthusiastically serving the people of the Arborg parish and the missions, criss-crossing the district in good weather and bad.

PART V

THE WESTERN DISTRICT

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY, the territory bounded by the Assiniboine River on the south and the Riding Mountain National Park on the north, and stretching from the Saskatchewan border to the shores of Lake Manitoba, has been designated as the Western District. Because the Polish immigrants settled in appreciable numbers on the southern slopes of the Riding Mountains, eleven of the fifteen churches in this district are located in this hilly and picturesque country.

The first missionaries to provide for the spiritual needs of the Poles in this area were Belgian Redemptorist Fathers from Brandon. Their ministry centered around the settlements at Huns Valley (Polonia) and Oakburn. The church at Huns Valley, isolated from the very echoes of the outside world, developed independently of the other churches in the vicinity. Oakburn, on the contrary, became the hub of a cluster

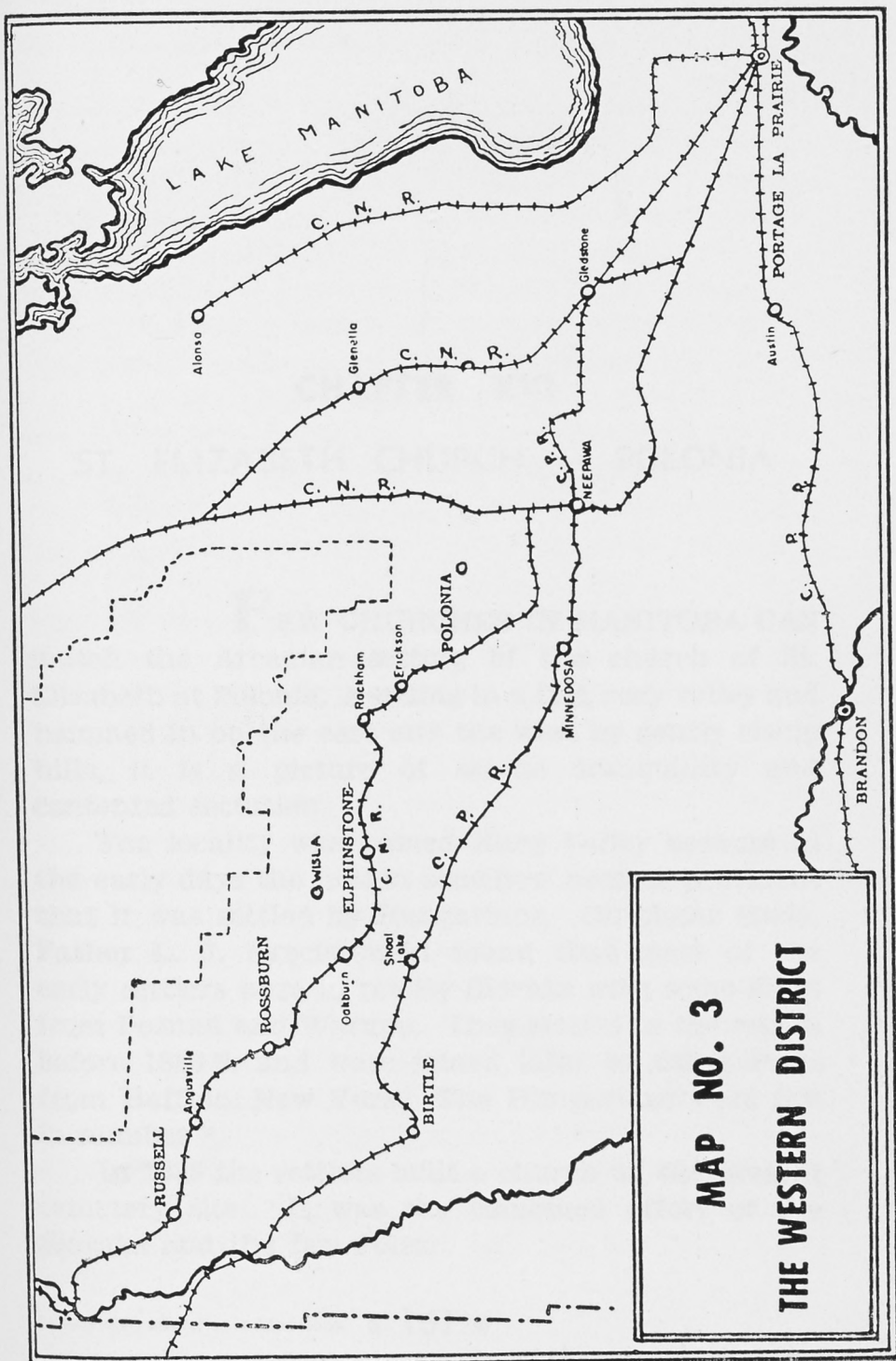
THE WESTERN DISTRICT

of chapels which sprang up around it. In time the territory of the Oakburn parish was divided, and today it constitutes the parishes of Rossburn and Elphinstone.

The story of St. Hyacinth's church at Portage la Prairie finds a place in this District, because of its ties with the missions of Plumas. These were once served from Portage la Prairie, being more accessible from there. St. Hedwig's church at Brandon has always stood as the strongest Polish center in the western part of Manitoba. Far removed from the other Poles of the district, the parish grew at its own pace and in its own manner, to become the largest Polish parish outside the city of Winnipeg.

Of the six Polish priests engaged in the ministry in this district, Father Lucien Sociński, as pastor at Neepawa, serves a parish which is about fifty per cent Polish. On the other hand, St. Hyacinth's church at Portage la Prairie has as its pastor a priest of Belgian origin.

In another field of the apostolate, the Benedictine Sisters help the Church in the district by their work in the hospitals at Russell and at Birtle.



MAP NO. 3
THE WESTERN DISTRICT

CHAPTER XVI

ST. ELIZABETH CHURCH — POLONIA

FEW CHURCHES IN MANITOBA CAN match the Arcadian setting of the church of St. Elizabeth at Polonia. Nestling in a flat, cozy valley and hemmed in on the east and the west by gently rising hills, it is a picture of serene tranquillity and contented seclusion.

The locality was named Huns Valley because in the early days the notion somehow became prevalent that it was settled by Hungarians. On closer study, Father L. J. Kręciszewski found that most of the early settlers were in reality Slovaks with some Poles from Poznań and Warmia. They settled in the region before 1886⁸⁸, and were joined later by other Poles from Buffalo, New York. The Hungarians were few in number⁸⁹.

In 1886 the settlers built a church on the present cemetery site. It was the combined effort of the Slovaks and the few Poles.

Four years later the Poles arrived in the settlement in greater numbers and the colony became predominantly Polish⁹⁰. So began this old but little-known Polish settlement.

After the visits of three Belgian Redemptorist Fathers in 1898, the first Polish priest to set foot in the colony was Father Suchawski, also a Redemptorist, who served the colony in 1899. Although he bore a Polish name, he spoke no Polish.

On June 12, Father A. Kulawy found his way to the settlement. This was the only recorded visit of an Oblate Father to the Valley. As a matter of fact, Huns Valley and all the Polish settlements south of the Riding Mountain National Park, were served first by the Redemptorist Fathers and then by diocesan priests. The missionary work of the Polish Oblates extended to this district only at a much later date.

Of the three Belgian priests, Father Adelard Delaere ministered in the colony the longest. From October 6, 1899, until his last visit on November 1, 1903, his patience was often taxed to the breaking point by the discord among the people. Under his guidance the Poles and the Slovaks built a new church on a two-acre plot donated by John Kwiatkowski. They completed the building in 1902 at the cost of \$2,285, and Archbishop Langevin blessed it on August 27. The rectory was also built at this time.

But there was no harmony in the parish. The two groups — Poles and Slovaks — could not agree. The discord came to a humorous climax when the Poles occupying one side the church and the Slovaks the

other, simultaneously sang hymns in their respective tongues.

In 1902, Father Delaere's extensive work required the help of Father A. Polaska as an assistant. But before he left Huns Valley to take up other duties, on November 24, 1903, he installed Father E. J. Kostorz as his successor. Father Kostorz found the conditions of work so intolerable that on June 11, 1905, he resigned his post. The cause of much of the trouble was the debt of \$2,700 which burdened the parish.

In 1905, Father Polaska returned to the colony as pastor and remained for four uneasy years. Materially the colony was progressing, for out of the fifty-four families settled there, thirty-nine already owned their farms. But spiritually it made little headway.

Until July of 1921, the beginning of Father A. Pluciński's pastorate, the ministry at Huns Valley was deeply unsettled and unorganized. While Father Joseph Szajnowski was pastor (1910 to 1915), Father Pluciński lived with him during April and May of 1910. Then Father Camillus Grzybała came to stay at the rectory. The reason for a second priest in the parish was that for three years Father Szajnowski served Shoal Lake once a month, and the other priests acted as his assistants.

On his Confirmation visit on August 5, 1909, Archbishop Langevin noted with relief: "We have found the parish in peace and we thank God for it." He also remarked that: "If a few historical notes on the parish could be written at once, it would be most agreeable to us."

As was customary among Poles, they gave the Archbishop a rousing welcome, with an escort of men on horseback and a procession under a baldachino. Although the Archbishop's visits in 1909 and in 1913 temporarily calmed the troubles in the parish, they did not bring permanent peace. On May 31, 1915, Father Thomas Grochowski, C. Ss. R., visited the parish as a conciliator. He gave a favorable report of his findings, but assured the Archbishop that harmony was impossible. In his opinion the people of the parish were good, but there were a few instigators and sowers of dissent who could not be silenced ⁹¹.

Neither did the frequent changes of priests have a settling effect on the parish. In 1916, Father Grzybala was in charge for a few months as an assistant to Father Joseph Solski, who was the non-resident pastor. In 1918, Father Leopold Blum was pastor, but Father Pluciński also visited the church. While Father Theodore F. Hucal was pastor in 1919, Father J. Knapik helped him.

When Archbishop Sinnott made his first pastoral visit to the parish on August 20, 1917, he pointed out to the people that neither interest nor principal were being paid on the parish debt of \$7,294. The disclosure of the debt came as a surprise to the one hundred families of the parish, who were then in the care of Father Solski, residing in Sifton.

The troubles in the parish were by no means ended when Father A. Pluciński became pastor in July, 1921. Conditions were so disturbed that he was reluctant to leave Oakburn and to take up residence

at Huns Valley. During his term as pastor, Fathers J. Knapik, A. Wiśniewski, F. Pander and J. Kuryś in turn either substituted for him or helped him, until his death on October 13, 1930.

In death Father Pluciński accomplished what he failed to do in life. His death seemed to bring to the parish a unity of mind and purpose hitherto unknown. The funeral service and the burial in the local cemetery were the occasion of a great gathering of priests and people, who paid their last tribute to a priest for his twenty years of work in Canada ⁹².

That a change was coming over the parish at Huns Valley was even presaged by the change of the name to Polonia. The name of the locality was officially changed through the successful efforts of John Pazdor, then editor of the *Gazeta Katolicka* (in 1930). But the new spirit became evident when Father L. J. Kręciszewski took charge of the parish on December 25, 1930 ⁹³. Although his tenure of the post lasted hardly a year, his influence on the people was deep and salutary. His friendly and unaffected personality immediately won the confidence and the cooperation of the people. His zeal for the betterment of the Church prompted him to make numerous material improvements to the church property during his brief pastorate.

He first extended the church by twenty-five feet, decorated the interior and improved the grounds. He then arranged a solemn blessing of the renovated church ⁹⁴. To provide a house for the Benedictine Sisters whom he had obtained to staff the school, he gave up the rectory and built quarters for himself

by enlarging the sacristy. And before he was transferred from the parish he had plans to build a parish hall. His administration marked a turning point in the parish of St. Elizabeth. His successor, Father A. Wiśniewski, who was pastor until December, 1934, built the proposed parish hall, which was soon destroyed by a fire, allegedly set by an arsonist.

Fathers Charles Łukasik (1934 to 1939), Francis Stroński (1939 to 1946) and Lucien Sociński (1946 to 1952) consolidated the gains the parish had made, both spiritually and materially. Of the numerous problems, the school was the most pressing one. Much needed improvements were constantly postponed, thus hampering the Sisters' work. The rectory showed signs of deterioration as did the Sisters' residence. Both the pastor and the Sisters endured living conditions which were little short of degrading.

When Father Anthony Łoziński succeeded Father Sociński, he effected some of the urgent improvements. He persuaded the people to cut down the ring of trees which encircled the church. For twenty years the trees had been a bone of contention. They added beauty to the grounds, but they were so tall and so closely spaced that their shade and moisture caused the building to mould. They disappeared to the last tree.

The parish suffered a considerable setback when the Benedictine Sisters withdrew from Polonia. Conditions at the school became intolerable due to the refusal of the people to make the needed improvements.

A wave of enthusiasm swept the parish following

the appointment in February of 1959 of Father Wacław Pluciński as administrator. His first project was to encase over the main altar an artistic painting of Our Lady of Częstochowa. The altar, which Father Stroński built in simple rubrical design, lent itself so aptly to the enshrinement of this picture that one wondered it had not been done sooner. The painting immediately caught the fancy of the people. Father Pluciński next redecorated the interior of the church, and renovated and modernized the rectory. The blessing, on September 6, 1959, of a grotto in honor of Our Lady, drew such a large gathering of participants to Polonia that the occasion was reminiscent of Father Kręciszewski's time.

CHAPTER XVII

ST. THERESA'S CHURCH AT ROSSBURN AND ITS MISSIONS

BEFORE 1938, THE TERRITORIES served today from St. Theresa's church at Rosssburn and from the Sacred Heart church at Elphinstone made up the Oakburn parish. The division of the territory in 1938, to create the parish at Elphinstone, left the Oakburn parish much reduced in size. And in 1947, when the priest transferred his residence from Oakburn to Rosssburn, the Oakburn church became a dependent mission chapel.

Nowhere in Manitoba have churches been built, demolished, rebuilt or moved with such surprising frequency as they have been in the Rosssburn pastoral charge. The history of Rosssburn as a parish follows a devious course which is traced in the story of the chapel at Oakburn Farms. The following notes merely sketch the story of St. Theresa's church as it stands in Rosssburn today.

The Polish pioneers who built a chapel in 1910,

ST. THERESA'S CHURCH AT ROSSBURN

twelve miles northeast of the village of Rossburn, chose as its patron St. Stanislas Kostka. In 1933, Father Jerome Podbielski, then pastor at Oakburn, dismantled this rough log chapel and replaced it with a larger church. Archbishop Sinnott blessed the new building on October 7, 1934, under the title of Christ the King. It remained a mission of Oakburn, as the former chapel had been.

Although the parish was called Oakburn, in reality the church stood six miles from the village of that name, and the priest resided there in forlorn seclusion, surrounded by woods and fields. Not until 1943, was the first step taken to transfer the priest's residence to a village. The village chosen, however, was not the neighboring village of Oakburn, but the more distant village of Rossburn, twelve miles away.

Father Joseph Łopuszański, an Oblate Father, effected the change. He bought a large house in Rossburn, the main floor of which was arranged as a chapel and the upper storey as living quarters for the priest. In 1947, Father August Michalik occupied this house at Rossburn as the first resident priest. Oakburn in turn became a mission dependent on the new parish.

The flimsy, cavernous building dissipated the heat so freely, that on frosty winter nights Father Michalik sought shelter in the local hotel. He resolved to remedy the situation.

First, in 1947, beside the existing building he erected a simple structure for a church, measuring forty-two feet by twenty-four. The following year he

ST. THERESA'S CHURCH AT ROSSBURN

dismantled the dual-purpose house and used the lumber to build a rectory, where he lived until October 1950. His successor, Father John Chwist, who served the parish at Rossburn and the dependent missions for only six months, made no alterations to the building.

With the arrival of Father Joseph Cieply, on March 28, 1951, new changes were brought about at Rossburn and the missions. After serving the parish for six years, Father Cieply undertook to provide the parish with a larger church.

Since the church of Christ the King, located twelve miles from the village of Rossburn, served only six families at that time, he moved it to the village. The building was placed on a full basement beside the existing church (which was not yet finished), it was enlarged and renovated until it was quite suitable for a parish church. In time the abandoned church, which had been blessed by Archbishop Murray on July 17, 1949, was sold to be rebuilt as a private dwelling.

When Father John Mendyka, the present pastor, took charge of the parish in September of 1958, he found the church adequate for the needs of the sixty families. Since the church had been moved from its original location and substantially altered, Archbishop Pocock blessed it on July 21, 1959, under the title of St. Theresa, the title of the former church. Today the Oblate Father who resides at Rossburn has charge also of the chapels at Oakburn Farms, Oakburn and Angusville.

ASSUMPTION CHAPEL — OAKBURN FARMS

The chapel which today stands unobtrusively six miles from the village of Oakburn was at one time the busy center of a farflung parish. Its history provides a graphic illustration of the changes which have shaped the fate of many Polish missions in Manitoba.

From simple beginnings the mission developed into a significant parish with several outlying chapels, then it declined and finally was reduced to a small wayside chapel. In retrospect, we must admire the zealous optimism of the missionaries, who, living in abject poverty, worked unceasingly for the day when their successors could exercise their ministry in more tolerable conditions.

The Poles who, in 1899, settled on homesteads fifteen miles north of the Shoal Lake railroad station, did not remain long without the ministrations of a priest. The first missionary, Father Delaere, who visited his scattered parish on horseback, found the settlers numerous enough in 1902, to undertake the building of a church. While waiting for the construction of a rectory, he lived in the choir-loft of the church. On completion of the crude buildings, the church was found to be trespassing on the public road allowance.

The one hundred and fifty baptisms recorded at St. John Cantius at Oakburn in 1902, indicate the considerable size of the parish. To assist him in the care of the parish, he obtained the help of Fathers E. Vrijdaegs and H. Borgonie.

With Father Finke, an Oblate missionary who

succeeded Father Delaere as pastor in 1904, began the rapid succession of priests, who each in turn, suffered the monotonous poverty and the oppressive solitude of the Oakburn parish. From 1906 to 1909, during the pastorate of Father Rech Margos, the Oakburn parish with the missions of Newdale, Rossburn and Snake Creek, numbered eighty families. Since travel from one settlement to another was a time and energy consuming undertaking, Father Joseph Szajnowski was assigned to help Father Margos⁹⁵. To add to the hardships, discord broke out between the missionary and the people. When both the pastor and the assistant were recalled, Father Conter, a Redemptorist Father from Yorkton, took charge of the parish as administrator.

On the occasion of his pastoral visit on August 16, 1911, Archbishop Langevin tried to compose the difficulties in the parish. When the people approached him to ask for a resident priest, he demanded of them two conditions: first, that the trustees remit the church collections to the pastor, and second, that each family contribute ten dollars a year for the support of the priest. "When we saw that all were well disposed", the Archbishop noted in the parish register, "and we assured them that the priest would give an annual accounting of receipts and expenditures publicly in church, we asked that all kneel. Then we put two questions to them, and when all answered in the affirmative, we blessed them and announced that Father Titus Wojnowski would be their resident priest. All were grateful and came to kiss our hand".

ST. THERESA'S CHURCH AT ROSSBURN

The Archbishop also recommended that the cemetery be cleared of brush and trees, that the church be moved from the public right-of-way, that a codex historicus be kept, and that the financial books be kept in English or French, 'ut possumus intelligere'.

On the second day of his visit the Archbishop confirmed one hundred and seventy-six persons. But peace was not restored either under Father Wojnowski nor under Father Anthony Pluciński.

For ten years — with the exception of an interval when he was absent — the figure of Father Pluciński dominated the Oakburn parish. In 1914, his parish comprised six hundred and fifty souls in one hundred and twenty-two families, living within a radius of twelve miles of the church ⁹⁶. The sight of the pastor driving about the country in his one-horse buggy became a familiar one to every parishioner. But life in these backwoods of Manitoba was hard for this talented missionary who had been raised and educated among the medieval splendors of the historic city of Cracow.

On his confirmation visit on August 15, 1918, Archbishop Sinnott found the old troubles still rife in the parish. He addressed the congregation of five hundred persons on the same subject of good relations with their pastor. The people forgot their promises too easily.

Work in the Polish missions of Manitoba brought together priests of many backgrounds. The missionary who succeeded Father Pluciński was a Polish

ST. THERESA'S CHURCH AT ROSSBURN

nobleman: the Reverend Dr. Alexander Korwin-Szymanowski. He bore the title of a count.

A deeply patriotic man, he gave to his missions Polish names derived from the titles of the chapels. Oakburn he called *Kantowo*; Angusville was *Trójcyn*; Rossburn, *Stanisławów* and Sandy Lake, *Antoniówka*. It is a distinct loss that these descriptive names were not adopted by the Poles, for they evoke the homely picture of a village built around a parish church.

Not only nobility of birth but nobility of character distinguished Father Korwin-Szymanowski. When he died, his successor, Father L. J. Kręciszewski, himself a man of unusual qualities, recognized the merits of his confrere in a poem he wrote in his memory ⁹⁷.

In his eight months' pastorate at Oakburn, Father Kręciszewski won the wholehearted respect and admiration of the people. The time not occupied in pastoral duties, he divided between writing and renovating the church. The building was in such poor repair that he easily persuaded the people to build a new church. But before he could carry out his plan, in September of 1925, he departed for Rome to pursue higher studies in theology.

But the good seed he planted bore early fruit. His successor, Father W. E. Maciaszek, had no difficulty in replacing the old log building with a new church, which was free from debt upon completion.

The parishioners did not enjoy the use of the new church for long. On November 2, 1928, only a short time after Father Joseph Kuryś replaced Father Maciaszek as pastor, a fire razed the building to the ground. Again the people set to work to erect

ST. THERESA'S CHURCH AT ROSSBURN

a new building. For many parishioners it was the third time they were contributing money and labor to a new church in their parish. The building when completed, evaluated at \$6,000, was debt-free. When Archbishop Sinnott blessed it in August of 1929, he gave it the title of the Assumption.

Thereafter Fathers P. Borkowicz (to April 13, 1933), A. Łoziński, Stephen Buszka, L. S. Faber and Jerome Podbielski (1934-1935) served the Oakburn parish and the missions. When the Oblate Fathers accepted the pastoral care of the district, Father Joseph Łopuszański (1943) was the last priest to reside at the Oakburn rectory. His successor, Father August Michalik, sold the rectory and took up residence in the village of Rossburn. The Assumption chapel at Oakburn Farms then became a mission of the Rossburn parish.

ST. CATHERINE'S CHAPEL — OAKBURN

Father Michalik began the construction of a church in the village of Oakburn in 1947, to accommodate about twenty families who lived there. They were mostly retired farmers, worn out by long years of work and unable to attend the church six miles beyond the village.

When Father Cieply took charge of the chapel, it was merely a shell of a building. He finished the interior, added a belfry and painted the church, giving it a trim appearance. Although Mass is celebrated there regularly today, it is one of the Polish chapels which will be closed in the not too distant future for lack of a congregation.

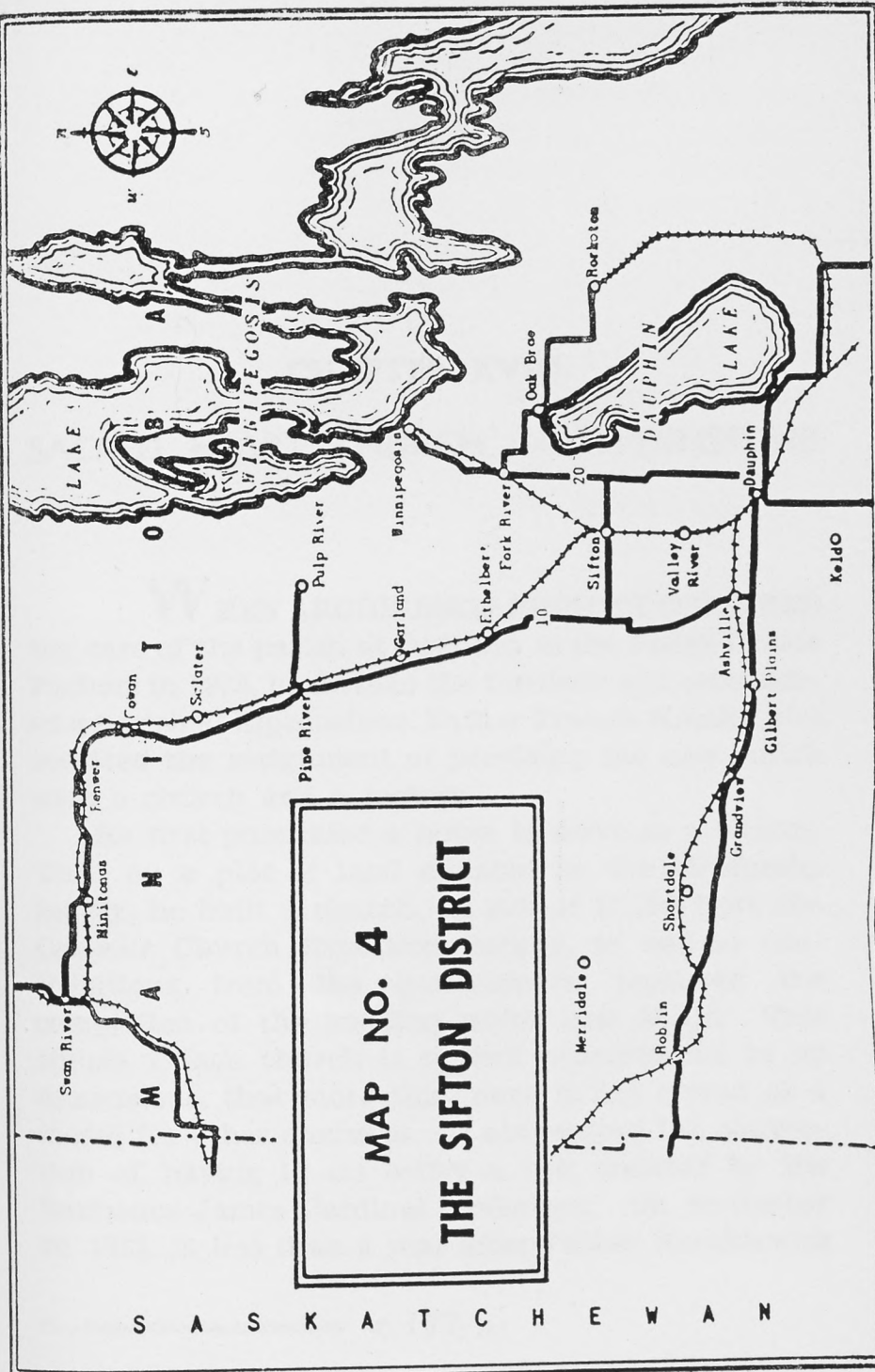
ST. THERESA'S CHURCH AT ROSSBURN

ST. ANTHONY'S CHAPEL — ANGUSVILLE

The blessing by Archbishop Pocock of St. Anthony's chapel at Angusville on July 20, 1959, marked the beginning of a new period in the mission. For almost fifty years the people had assembled in a small log building which they began in 1907, and which took five years to complete. The dozen families who made up the congregation of Holy Trinity chapel — as it was then called — could attend services there only in dry weather in the summer months, since they built the church eight miles from the village in a territory served by extremely poor roads ⁹⁸.

The first missionaries to visit the chapel were the Redemptorist Fathers from Brandon and Polish priests from Winnipeg. Later it was attached to the Oakburn parish and the priests who resided there called at the chapel when weather conditions permitted. Today it is in the care of the pastor of Rossburn.

The excavation for the basement of the present church was started in June of 1957, on a site which Father Cieply had wisely chosen in the village. The project was substantially aided by a gift of \$2,000 from the Catholic Church Extension Society and the voluntary labor of the parishioners. Even the resident physician, Dr. Jonas Johnson, worked with hammer and saw to speed the construction of the church. Today it is the pride of the community which built it.



MAP NO. 4
THE SIFTON DISTRICT

S A S K A T C H E W A N

CHAPTER XVIII

SACRED HEART CHURCH — ELPHINSTONE

WHEN ARCHBISHOP SINNOTT CONFIDED the care of the parish at Oakburn to the Polish Oblate Fathers in 1938, he divided the territory and established a parish at Elphinstone. Father Francis Kosakiewicz received the assignment of providing the new parish with a church and a rectory.

He first purchased a house to serve as a rectory. Then on a plot of land donated by the McMurchy family, he built a church. A gift of \$1,100 from the Catholic Church Extension Society, as well as contributions from the parishioners, hastened the completion of the building which cost \$3,500. This simple village church is so well proportioned in its dimensions, that more than once it has served as a model for other churches. It also enjoys the distinction of having in its belfry a bell donated by His Eminence James Cardinal McGuigan. On November 20, 1938, in less than a year after Father Kosakiewicz

arrived at Elphinstone, Archibishop Sinnot blessed the church and dedicated it to the Sacred Heart.

In spite of its brief existence as a self-sustaining congregation, the parish has made rapid progress both spiritually and materially under the care of zealous pastors like Fathers John Bednarz, E. Rygu-siak, and A. Bagsik, the present incumbent. The seventy-five families which make up the parish today belong to various ethnic groups, the Poles, however, predominating in numbers.

Blaise Dziver led the contingent of Poles who settled in the vicinity of Elphinstone in 1900. The first dollar they earned in their new country came from the sale of cordwood which they cut on the slopes of the hilly land.

Before the first missionaries visited them, these homesick pioneers often assembled on Sundays in the homes of Jacob Kwiatkowski or Nicholas Kraw-czuk. There, deep in the wilderness of Manitoba, the little log-house rang with the joyful rhythm of the Little Office, or the mournful cadences of the Passion (Gorzkie Żale), which the Poles love to sing. They possessed two strong attachments: the Church and the soil. These devotions eased their loneliness. They had severed their ties with the land in Poland, but had not yet forged new bonds with the soil of Manitoba. Their Faith they had brought with them: it was their sole consolation.

MISSIONS OF ELPHINSTONE

While the city pastor must come to grips with the

problems of serving a numerous congregation in one parish, the missionary pastor must grapple with the task of caring for a sparse congregation dispersed over a wide area. In the Elphinstone pastoral charge, the chapels at Wisła, Rackham, Shoal Lake, and Erickson also fall under the care of the pastor, making travel a part of his daily work.

When Archbishop Sinnott visited Wisła to bless the newly built church, as was his custom, he recorded the event in the parish register. It is a good summary of the history of the chapel.

"The 15th of August 1917, we blessed the church of Ss. Peter and Paul at Wisła. The construction of this church was commenced about a year ago. It was built on private property, but the site with four acres of land was generously donated to the Church by Mr. Jacob Kwiatkowski, and was recently incorporated into the Roman Catholic Archiepiscopal Corporation of Winnipeg.

"On the way from St. John Cantius Church, Oakburn, we were met by a cavalcade and escorted to the new church, where a very large concourse of people had assembled, some of them coming from as far as forty-five miles. After the blessing of the church, High Mass was sung by Very Reverend John Blair, V. G., and a discourse in Polish was delivered by the parish priest, Reverend Anthony Pluciński. At the conclusion of the service we addressed a few words in English to the congregation thanking them for their loyal and devoted reception, which was an evidence of their strong Catholic faith, and congratulating them on the temple which they had by their

generosity and sacrifice erected to God's worship. After the Mass we repaired to the home of Mr. Jacob Kwiatkowski, the generous donor mentioned above, where we had luncheon.

"Our thanks are particularly due to Mr. Michael Kwiatkowski, the worthy son of the gentleman just mentioned, who showed us such kind and courteous attention, conveying us in his automobile to and from Wisła, as well as from the railway station to the pastor's residence on the day of our arrival, and from the pastor's residence to Shoal Lake on our departure.

"The Polish people in this parish of Oakburn and the mission of Wisła impress us as loyal, devoted Catholics. We most willingly and cordially bless them and their zealous pastor, Father Anthony Pluciński."

Today the mission of Wisła numbers about ten families, who are being drawn more and more into the Elphinstone parish ⁹⁹.



There is an indistinct allusion that the Poles in the Rackham neighborhood built a small chapel in 1905. But no record exists to substantiate this affirmation.

The present church, where the seventy families of the mission assemble for worship, dates from 1923. Archbishop Sinnott blessed it on June 4 of the same year, under the title of St. Anthony. The locality was known as Sandy Lake, while Father Korwin-Szymanowski named it *Antoniówka*.

That the Poles delighted in attending church services is manifest from the lengthy devotions which Father P. P. Borkowicz conducted. In spite of the long distance the people had to travel, a considerable number of parishioners gathered in church on December 31, 1932, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon for the services of the closing of the year. The devotions began with a sermon by the pastor; then followed Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary, the Litany of All Saints, an Act of Consecration, the Penitential Psalms, the Supplications (*Święty Boże*), prayers for the benefactors of the parish, and finally Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The service easily lasted two hours.

On the following day, the Feast of the Circumcision, a High Mass was celebrated at 11 o'clock, and after Mass the congregation gathered to share the '*Oplatek*'.

In breaking the *Oplatek* with their pastor, the parishioners were adapting to the parish, a custom which they religiously observed in their homes on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. At the evening meal on Christmas Eve, the head of the family broke the *Oplatek* ¹⁰⁰ with all the members of the household. At this moment the family exchanged greetings. After the meal, the householder went to the barn and placed a fraction of the wafer in the mouth of the cattle, because "in their midst Christ chose to be born".

The custom of breaking the Christmas wafer recalls the eucharistic repast of the early centuries, manifesting the unity of charity in the Christian

community. From the family circle, the Poles extended the custom of the *Oplatek* to the parish, where the parish priest holds the place of a spiritual father. On a given day within the liturgical season of Christmas, the parishioners meet for a meal at which the pastor shares the *Oplatek* and greetings with his spiritual children. Such was the significance of the gathering held after Mass at Rackham on New Year's day. After the meal, they spent the time (as they did in their own homes after the Christmas Eve supper) in reminiscing about past Christmases in the Old Country and in singing Polish Christmas carols ¹⁰¹.

At the time of his visit at Rackham, Father Bor-kowicz also announced a High Mass for February 2, Candlemas, which was the 10th anniversary of the building of the church ¹⁰². By their faithful attendance at the services, the people clearly demonstrated their love for the Church.



The congregations at Erickson and Shoal Lake built their churches only a few decades ago. At Erickson a Mr. Krisko initiated the idea of building a church. With the sum of \$650 provided by the Catholic Church Extension Society, Father Frank Kosakiewicz purchased a house which he reconstructed for use as a church. It accommodates about a hundred people. On November 20, 1938, Archbishop Sinnott blessed the chapel and placed it under the patronage of St. Jude the Apostle.



Two years later, on June 16, 1940, Archbishop Sinnott dedicated to St. Helen, the new church at Shoal Lake. "The new church is completed interiorly and exteriorly", wrote the Archbishop, "and when painted outside, will present a very attractive appearance. This church has been long needed at Shoal Lake and we rejoice in its construction. The people are very proud of it and have good reason to be so. If they join their enthusiastic support to Father Bednarz, their pastor, we can predict a very bright future for the mission."

The mission today numbers some twenty-four families.

CHAPTER XIX

ST. HYACINTH'S CHURCH — PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

ST. HYACINTH'S CHURCH AT PORTAGE la Prairie literally sprang from the ashes of St. Cuthbert's church which was gutted by fire in the early part of 1913. When the committee of St. Cuthbert's met to lay plans for rebuilding the church, a few representative Poles attended the meeting and offered \$200 for what material could be salvaged from the debris. The committee accepted the offer, and the charred lumber from one church went into the building of another.

John Żywina, Simon Charchała, Michael Gardyj, and Dominic Pelechaty made up the enterprising group who went to Winnipeg to apprise Father Kowalski, their visiting Oblate missionary, of what they had initiated and what their intentions were. Father Kowalski endorsed their plan, and he accompanied the delegation to St. Boniface to obtain the approval of the Archbishop. Bishop Beliveau received them.

ST. HYACINTH'S CHURCH — PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

kindly, and not only gave his blessing to the project but also donated \$200 to encourage the Poles in their undertaking.

The spokesmen for the forty Polish families, who were then members of St. Cuthbert's, gave as their reason for founding a new church, the language difficulty. The apostolic minded Archbishop Langevin understood their condition too well to place any obstacles in their way.

The Poles purchased a lot on Elizabeth Street and 5th Avenue for the sum of \$368.15. And on May 31, when Father Kowalski came to celebrate Mass for them, he called a meeting in the evening to discuss the plan for the new church. They decided to erect a brick building, sixty-four feet by thirty-two, with a belfry, a full basement and a sacristy.

On July 8, 1913, Father Kowalski blessed the land for the church, and excavation began. The work progressed satisfactorily and soon Monsignor Dugas laid the cornerstone, with Fathers Prud'homme, Schulte and Kowalski assisting. Father Prud'homme preached the sermon in English and Father Kowalski in Polish. On December 21, Bishop Beliveau blessed the unfinished church, and Father Kowalski celebrated the first mass in the new edifice. The Bishop preached the sermon, administered the sacrament of Confirmation and gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. At this stage the building cost \$4,000 ¹⁰⁴.

St. Hyacinth was chosen as the patron saint of the church, since he has long been honored by the Polish people. A disciple of St. Dominic, he founded many convents of his Order in Poland ¹⁰⁵. The

disastrous fire at St. Cuthbert's might also have inclined the Poles to choose a patron saint who was traditionally invoked as a protector against fire.

Until Father Francis Stroński (1921 to 1939) became the first resident priest in 1921, St. Hyacinth remained a mission church. In 1921, the missions of the district were attached to St. Hyacinth's.

Priests who served St. Hyacinth's as visiting missionaries were Fathers Nandzik and Heintze, both Oblate Fathers, and Fathers Sołski, Korwin-Szymanowski, Zielonka, Urbanik, and Kręciszewski. Father E. Oroskovits was resident pastor, as were Fathers Z. A. J. Bączkowski, L. Sowiński, and M. A. Minvielle. The last named converted the church basement into living quarters for the priest, which proved to be a costly and impractical arrangement.

Thanks to Father Sowiński, a debt which had been accumulating on the books of the St. Boniface Chancery Office was finally liquidated. Father Gregory Rokosz as pastor, and the writer as administrator, were followed in January of 1953, by Father Mark Nelissen, a Franciscan of the Capuchin branch. Father Mark, a priest of Dutch origin, in his six years' pastorate succeeded in remolding the spirit of the parish. His successor, Father Bernard Robert, took over in 1959, a parish which is steadily gaining in importance.

St. Hyacinth's was always looked upon as being on the wrong side of the tracks. The parish has developed so favorably under the guidance of Father Mark, that its future looks more promising today than at any time in the past. When the modest

ST. HYACINTH'S CHURCH — PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

house which the parish purchased for a residence is replaced by a suitable rectory, the parish will have made another notable stride forward.

CHAPTER XX

MISSIONS OF PLUMAS

THE CHAPEL AT PLUMAS FINDS a place in this study not because it is numbered among the Polish churches but because two of the missions, Glenella and Alonsa, are predominantly Polish, and because Polish priests have served this mission-parish for the last twenty years or more.

Plumas first came to the attention of Archbishop Sinnott in 1916, when he sent Father C. F. McNeil there to study the needs of the few scattered Catholic families. The following year the Archbishop himself visited the locality, to learn of the needs of his flock at firsthand.

As a result of these visits, in 1918, Father J. J. Blair bought an old schoolhouse to serve as a place of worship. The six Catholic families immediately raised \$700 to pay for it. When the sum fell short of the amount required, George Grenier doubled his contribution to make up the full amount. On August

18, the Archbishop blessed the transformed school-house under the title of Ss. Peter and Paul, in the presence of about one hundred persons. Father McNeil celebrated the Mass and the Archbishop confirmed twenty-five persons in the newly-founded chapel. Henceforth he attached Plumas as a mission to Portage la Prairie, and Fathers Rheaume and F. Stroński attended it as the first regular missionaries.

When Dutch immigrants settled on the land around Plumas, Father Cox, a priest of their own origin, remained with them for several months. In August of 1928, he made an attempt to buy an old Lutheran church at Tenby for the exclusive use of his people. But he could not raise the sum of \$2,000 which the Lutherans asked for the church and a house¹⁰⁶. Father Cox, somewhat discouraged at his failure to organize his people, departed for Holland, and left Plumas without the services of a resident priest.

Archbishop Sinnott then persuaded the Capuchin Fathers to accept the mission. And in November of 1929, Father Emmanuel Roets became pastor at Plumas. Again the old schoolhouse underwent alterations; this time to provide living quarters for a priest besides space for a church. After a month's assiduous work, Father Emmanuel with Brother Angelic were able to occupy their new residence. But it was not until the following May that Father Emmanuel completed the building to his satisfaction. He put the finishing touches to it by painting the exterior a colonial yellow with white trim and a fresh green roof. The Capuchin Fathers thereafter served

MISSIONS OF PLUMAS

the mission until December 1933, when it reverted to diocesan priests.

In 1935, both Father T. Archbold and Father Robert Neary resided there. Then for a time Father Neary alone remained in charge, until Father O'Shea became pastor on June 2, 1936. He transferred his living quarters to Gladstone, thus leaving Plumas as a mission. On the departure of Father O'Shea in 1938, Father Casimir Kiczuk became pastor of Gladstone for a brief period. These constant changes left the ministry at Plumas in a thoroughly unstable condition.

In 1939, when Father Francis Strózewski came to Gladstone as pastor, with a gift of \$500 from the Catholic Church Extension Society, he continued the building of a new church at Plumas, which his predecessor had begun. In 1940, he also built a neat rectory near the church and moved from Gladstone to Plumas, where he resided until 1944.

For the next eleven years Father Gregory Rokosz (6 years), and Father Anthony Prusinowski (5 years) served Plumas and the missions. The present pastor, Father Victor Łyczko, who took charge of this struggling parish in 1955 has succeeded in a large measure in arousing the people from their apathy, and in bringing some life to the missions.



Of the three mission chapels attended from Plumas, the Gladstone mission, with the major part of its congregation of Hungarian origin, is the largest.

In 1936, when Father O'Shea moved from Plumas to Gladstone, he intended to develop Gladstone as a parish. But his successors saw little hope in such a plan, and preferred Plumas as their place of residence.

Today a trim stucco church stands at Gladstone, replacing first a house which served a dual purpose, and then the old brick church which had later been bought from a Protestant congregation, and was demolished in 1958 to make room for the new building. The blessing of the new church on July 1, 1958, was the crowning of many months of hard work by the people and their pastor.

The two Polish missions of Plumas show no promise of growth. Although Mass was celebrated for the Poles in Glenella in the early years of the century by Father John Kulawy and his successors, it was not until 1933 that the present chapel was built. Father Francis Stroński, then residing at Portage la Prairie, received \$500 from the Catholic Church Extension Society for a chapel which was to be named Christ the King. The church was completed during the summer, and Archbishop Sinnott blessed it on October 24, 1933. An eyewitness reports that in spite of the heavy rain on the day of the blessing, a considerable congregation gathered for the occasion.

The third chapel within the pastoral charge of Plumas, is the chapel of the Assumption of Our Lady at Alonsa. Although John Pachla donated the land for the church in 1913, the people did not build the chapel until 1919. That Polish priests from Portage

la Prairie, from Winnipeg and even from Selkirk (in 1933) served this chapel, indicates the irregularity of the ministry in this out-of-the-way mission. The congregation, made up of Poles and Anglo-Saxons, nonetheless shows more stability than some larger missions.

CHAPTER XXI

ST. HEDWIG'S CHURCH — BRANDON

THE ENTIRE POLISH COMMUNITY in Manitoba rejoices at the success of St. Hedwig's parish in Brandon in erecting its handsome new church. The credit for this achievement belongs in large measure to Father Jerome Podbielski. His effective leadership has molded his congregation into an active, dynamic community. It is no mere pleasantry to say that today many parishes — particularly in the cities — tend to become processing centers which provide the facilities and the services for the spiritual welfare of the parishioners. The true concept of a parish as a community or a spiritual family worshipping and working together is on the wane. By shaping his parish into a Christian assembly, Father Podbielski has accomplished what otherwise would have been impossible.

When the first Poles arrived in Brandon in 1898, perforce they frequented St. Augustine's, which was

ST. HEDWIG'S CHURCH — BRANDON

the only Catholic church in the city. Because they did not understand the English language, Father S. Mayer, a Belgian Redemptorist priest who knew some Polish, preached to them occasionally in their own tongue after the parish Mass. He was their first pastor ¹⁰⁷.

In ten years the number of Polish families in Brandon had grown to one hundred and fifty. The Poles soon became restless, for in a church where they considered themselves but guests, they could not keep their cherished traditions, which are so closely bound with their Religion. They began discussing the possibility of building their own church. The need for a Polish parish made itself felt so much the more strongly, since in 1908, the *Sokol Society* was established in Brandon, and the Polish National church in Winnipeg was actively seeking new members. Consequently, in 1912, the Polish Catholics purchased lots for a church, and on February 17, Archbishop Langevin canonically erected the parish of St. Hedwig for the Poles of Brandon ¹⁰⁸.

The canonical establishment of the parish was only the first step. To provide a Polish priest, and to erect a church proved more difficult. The Redemptorist Fathers, who were then in charge of St. Augustine's parish, obtained for the post of pastor for the Poles, the services of Father Thomas Grochowski of their own Congregation. He did not succeed in building a church for the Poles.

His successor, Father Joseph Knapik, had more concrete plans. Not only did he plan a church for the Poles, but also a school. The \$5,000 which the

Poles had to their credit fell far short of the cost of his ambitious project. He, therefore, proposed to sell the ten lots which the Poles had bought, and with the proceeds to buy an Anglican church which was posted for sale. The drawback in this scheme was that the Anglican church stood in the choice residential district, while the Poles lived down "on the flats". Nevertheless, in 1920, the transaction was concluded and the Poles in Brandon acquired a church of their own.

Once the ball started rolling there was no stopping it. The parish also purchased a building for a school, and another, under number 229 on 12th street for a rectory. The parish plant was complete — but not paid for.

The parish was not insolvent, as the revenues of the parish in 1920 totalled \$9,415.05. But the expenditures exceeded \$10,500. The situation although far from hopeless, demanded a prudent and careful administration of the finances.

To the view of the Redemptorist Fathers the situation had got out of hand, and they relinquished the parish. When Archbishop Sinnott placed Father P. Rączaszek in charge of the parish in 1922, the debt stood at \$18,000.

Not the large debt but the discouragement of the people brought the spirit of the parish to a low ebb. The pastor could make no headway in liquidating the debt.

In February of 1923, Father Walter Urbanik, curate of St. John Cantius church in Winnipeg, took charge of the parish. Until Easter he resided in

Winnipeg; then he moved to Brandon. His brave efforts to shake the parish out of its black mood of pessimism failed. Disheartened himself, he left Brandon and returned to the United States.

His successors, Fathers I. E. Zielonka, Charles Łukasik, Andrew Wiśniewski, and Marian Orliński hardly fared better in changing the disposition of the people. The first hopeful signs of an awakening appeared when Father Thaddeus Dereziński, an undaunted optimist, became pastor. His appointment came about through the influence of Father L. J. Kręciszewski.

On April 13, 1936, Father Kręciszewski, then pastor at Sifton, received from Archbishop Sinnott the appointment to St. Hedwig's parish. He went to Brandon to celebrate Mass on the following Sunday. Thereafter he asked his assistant, Father Thaddeus Dereziński, to replace him at Brandon. Father Dereziński appeared so happy with the arrangement that on November 21, the Archbishop named him pastor of St. Hedwig's. He worked enthusiastically in the parish until October of 1944, when he departed for the United States.

In 1944, on Father Podbielski's arrival in Brandon, the parish seemed doomed to an aimless, languishing existence. The problems were numerous and varied. Not the least of the difficulties was the excessive individualism of the Poles of the old generation. Each had his own views on the manner of administering the parish, and each tried to impose his ideas on the pastor. Father Podbielski solved the problem by rallying the young generation about him.

Although it was evident that a new church was needed, he repaired and spruced up the old building to serve immediate needs. He started a building fund, organized parish societies, and soon it was plain that the tide had turned, and the parish was moving forward. A parish campaign for funds, organized without professional help, brought \$60,000 in pledges. When Archbishop Pocock approved the plans of the new church and the manner of financing it, the old building, condemned as unsafe, was demolished, and in June of 1957, in a spirit of high enthusiasm the parishioners began work on the new church. On September 11, the Archbishop blessed and laid the corner stone for the new structure, and on February 1, 1959, he blessed the new church. The building comprises a spacious auditorium and a well-laid-out rectory. This building which is evaluated at \$150,000 was made possible only through the generous help of the parishioners in providing voluntary labor ¹⁰⁹.

The pastor's solicitude for the spiritual welfare of his people, and especially for the children, is evidenced in the large number of children he has succeeded in gathering for classes in religious instruction. To expedite the transportation of the children who live in all parts of the city, the parish purchased a large passenger bus.

The wholesome community spirit which prevails in the parish today, gives promise that the debt of \$45,000 will be quickly paid, that the church will be appropriately furnished, and that the future of the parish is assured.

PART VI

THE SIFTON DISTRICT

THE VILLAGE WHICH GIVES ITS name to the Sifton District was for twenty-five years the headquarters from which the missionary went out to every Polish chapel in the entire area. This vast area, covering some five thousand square miles in the northwest corner of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, was opened for settlement to eastern European immigrants, when the railroad reached Dauphin in 1896 ¹¹⁰.

If the assertion that the Poles are being absorbed by the Ukrainians should find its justification anywhere, it is in this region. For though the Poles form the major part of the Catholic population of the Latin Rite, in locality after locality they are outnumbered by the Slavs of the Greek Rite. Nonetheless, not only have they maintained their sixteen chapels in this district, but they have improved them and in some instances replaced them with larger buildings. While living on amicable terms with their neighbors of the

THE SIFTON DISTRICT

Greek Rite, the Poles have unquestionably retained their own identity.

Through the years various plans were tried in the Sifton District to give the numerous chapels effective pastoral care. In 1936, the pastor at Sifton obtained the services of two assistant priests, who shared with him the burden of the ministry. The arrangement had much to recommend it. The people received more frequent and more regular visits from the priests, while the priests benefited by their mutual association in Sifton. But the meager revenues from the missions proved insufficient to defray even traveling expenses.

To eliminate the need for long trips, the territory was then divided into mission-parishes, enabling the priest to reside among the people he served. Thus Winnipegosis, Grandview and Pine River became centers for resident priests, who started the long disheartening task of developing these missions into parishes.

Their work and sacrifices, although by no means fruitless, have not brought spectacular results. Today the priests who serve these parishes, still lead the precarious life of the missionary.

CHAPTER XXII

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH — SIFTON

THE FIRST MASS WHICH THE Polish immigrants attended on their arrival at Sifton, marked the end of their wearisome journey from their homeland, and the beginning of their new life in Manitoba. Father Page, a French Oblate missionary, celebrated the Mass for them in 1898, in the Sifton railroad station. The congregation which crowded the station waiting-room included Paul Sopel, Anthony Polowy, Anthony Kruk, Andrew Gancarz, John Skulmowski, Nicholas Rokosz, Joseph Czarnecki, Francis Kaliczak, John Kuczurawy, John Stadnik, Jacob Zagrodny, Joseph Kwolik and Joseph Garliński. Although they were eager, healthy men, accustomed to hard work and privations, they stood silent and apprehensive, on the threshold of their venture in this strange land.

Their meeting with Father A. Kulawy at Valley River on September 28, 1898, and again at Sifton on

January 15, 1899, heightened their spirits considerably. They greeted him so warmly that he returned to their settlement ten times within the year, celebrating Mass and administering the sacraments in their unfinished log-houses. At once he urged them to build a church.

Archbishop Langevin, well aware of their poverty, launched the project with a gift of \$50, and in 1900, Father Greczel began the construction of a chapel. In their desire to keep the expenses at a minimum, they limited the dimensions of the chapel to twenty-five feet by eighteen. It was evident that the building was too small. Immediately, they began to erect a new one, which a forest fire reduced to ashes. Discouraged by these inauspicious beginnings, from 1902 until 1906, they made no further attempt to provide a larger chapel, in spite of the pleas of their pastor, Father Anthony Połaska.

Father Leonard Nandzik, on taking charge of the Sifton mission in 1907, overcame this hesitancy of the people by enlisting the help of Paul Sopel, Anthony Kruk and Anthony Polowy to collect funds among the settlers. They raised \$200. And for the third time, without plan or foresight, the people undertook the building of a church. On the same site, one and one half miles from the village, they also erected a rough shack, which they intended for a rectory.

With a little church and a residence for the priest in their settlement, it is not surprising that on December 12, 1910 ¹¹¹, the people petitioned Archbishop Langevin to send them a resident priest. Three

months later the Archbishop appointed Father Pluciński as the first resident missionary in Sifton.

With his arrival the mission sprang to life: more so perhaps than the people had bargained for. He first furnished the chapel with pews and all the requirements for divine service. And while the rectory was being completed, he lived at the home of Anthony Polowy. But it soon became apparent that the church was inconveniently situated. He, therefore, proposed that the church and the rectory be moved to the village. The people demurred, fearing the expense of such an undertaking. For the first time they felt the full financial burden of supporting the church and the pastor, a responsibility which, in their homeland, was borne by the State.

On his first pastoral visitation to Sifton on May 30, 1911, Archbishop Langevin also recommended the move. But the people hesitated in spite of his offer of fifteen acres of land in the village. When the Archbishop returned for Confirmation on July 12, 1912, and found the church still on the old site, he demonstratively walked the mile and a half from the railroad station to the church. But the people remained unmoved. Father Pluciński left Sifton on October 23, having failed in his attempt to relocate the church in the village.

What Father Pluciński could not persuade the people to do on any terms, Father Solski led them to do with enthusiasm. In 1915, two years after he became pastor, the parishioners gladly built a new church in the village. Although poor and devoid of any architectural style, it was centrally located.

The improvisation by Father Solski of appropriate ceremonies for the blessing of the new building on July 1, 1915, is worth noting. The event began with a Mass offered by Father Kosian in the old church. The congregation then marched in procession to the new site. Father Solski celebrated Mass in the new church, which was as yet without a roof. Since the parish counted only thirty-three families, and these were poor, they salvaged all possible material from the old building to complete the new one ¹¹².

Father Solski's zeal knew no bounds. In his missionary travels, which took him far and wide, he sought out every family. Ashville, Ethelbert, Mink Creek, Garland, Pine River, Sclater, Valley River, Dauphin, Keld, Shortdale, Roblin, Glenella, Agard-sley, Fork River, Winnipegosis, Pine Creek, Oak Brae and Toutes Aides were the points of call on his itinerary. His name became a household word in every Polish community in Manitoba. Sifton lost the services of this untiring missionary, when he left to take up duties in Winnipeg.

For seventeen years after Father Solski's departure, the priests who served Sifton and the far-flung territory, continued to follow the pattern set by the first missionaries. Except for the chapels they built here and there, they introduced few innovations. The basic problem of how to provide more frequent services for the numerous missions remained unsolved.

Father Hucal, the first of the six pastors of this period, endured the vicissitudes of missionary life for a year and a half (1919 to 1920). To his successor, Father Francis Stroński, the problems of the missions

were a challenge. Thanks to his zeal and his good humor, this newly ordained priest came through his three years' pastorate with his optimism unimpaired. As helpers or substitutes in the ministry, he had Fathers J. Knapik and A. Słomiński.

For the next ten years Fathers Joseph Kuryś (1924 to 1927), Andrew Wiśniewski (1927 to 1928), Marian Orliński (1928 to 1933), and Anthony Łoziński (1933 to 1935) struggled with the problems of the missionary ministry. The task was well nigh impossible, and in some of the chapels they could hold services but once or twice a year. This hardly fostered a lively Faith in the people.

When Father Joe (as Father Kręciszewski was known) came to Sifton in August of 1935, he used all his ingenuity and resourcefulness not only to regain lost ground but to improve the pastoral care in the whole district¹¹³. He succeeded where his predecessors had failed because between 1935 and 1939, he successively had the assistance of six priests: Fathers F. Stróżewski, J. Sieczkarski, T. Dereziński, Z. A. Bączkowski, M. Trzaskoma and the writer. These were young men whom Archbishop Sinnott sent to Sifton usually in the first year of their priesthood, to gain experience in mission work under the wise and kindly direction of Father Kręciszewski.

The opening of a Convent in Sifton by the Benedictine Sisters also contributed considerably to the progress of the parish. ,

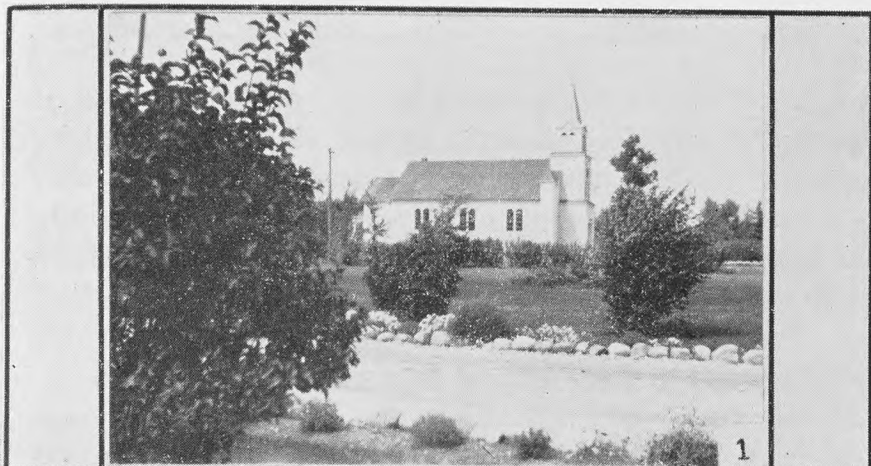
The sum of Father Joe's work at Sifton and in the missions is astounding. Just as in Polonia, so here his pastorate signalled a turning point in the

life of the parish. He constantly worked to improve the church property. He remodelled the church beyond recognition, decorating the interior and the exterior. He added a chapel in honor of St. Joseph, landscaped the grounds and made numerous other changes. Most of the work he did alone, if he could not find a willing hand to help him. He gave his parishioners a striking example of a life of work and prayer.

The spiritual welfare of the people always concerned him deeply. To instruct the children of his missions, on October 1, 1936, he inaugurated a course of Catechism by Correspondence. In a few years it grew into a major undertaking. This course alone entailed work enough to keep a priest occupied. He was able to conduct it only because the Benedictine Sisters helped to mail and to correct the lessons.

But he also found time to write and to print. He contributed numerous articles to the *Gazeta Katolicka*. He wrote and printed a Life of Our Lord, and reprinted a long list of pamphlets. Never has a man made such diligent use of his time, and never has a small rural parish been the scene of such varied activity.

In order to give better care to the people in the missions, on the advice of Father Joe, Archbishop Sinnott divided the district into parishes. In 1937, when the Benedictine Sisters built their hospital at Winnipegosis, the Archbishop established a parish there and appointed Father J. Sieczkarski as parish priest. In 1939, he made Grandview a parish, attached



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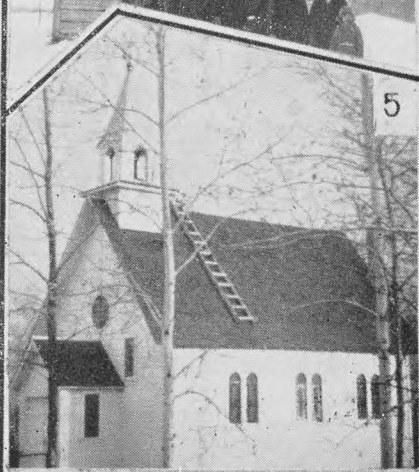
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1. Corpus Christi Church, Winnipegosis
2. Our Lady of Lorette, Fork River
3. St. Anthony, Rorketon — the original chapel
4. Ss. Peter and Paul, Wisla
5. St. Anthony Church, Rorketon

to it the missions west of Dauphin, and confided their pastoral care to Father M. Trzaskoma. The following year a rectory was built at Pine River, and the chapels along the Swan River line became the missions dependent on the new parish, which was assigned to Father Z. A. Baczkowski. Thus in 1941, Father Joe attended Ashville as his only mission.

But his boundless zeal for the good of the Church soon consumed his physical energies. His health broke down, and after a short illness, he died on May 2, 1952. Profound sorrow engulfed the parish at the loss of their beloved pastor, who had served them faithfully for seventeen years.

Although the parishioners had been deeply attached to Father Kręciszewski, they received their new pastor, Father M. Iwański, with an open heart. Two unfortunate events have marked his administration. The parish suffered a first loss when the Benedictine Sisters closed their convent in 1954. The second loss was the destruction by fire on February 15, 1955, of the church which had been the pride of the parish. With the sum of \$10,000 received from the insurance company, and an equal amount contributed by the parishioners, Father Iwański soon had a new church standing. For convenience and comfort, it far surpasses the old building.

With the death of Father Kręciszewski, Pine River with its missions reverted to Sifton. And today, few priests in Manitoba travel the long distances which the pastor of Sifton must cover to celebrate a second or a third Mass.

Holy Trinity parish, built at the cost of so many

hardships and sacrifices, stands as a monument to the Polish priests and people of this northern district. It is still a testing ground for the missionary spirit ¹¹⁴.

MISSIONS OF SIFTON

Every priest who has served the Poles at Ethelbert, has marvelled at their deep Faith and their sincere devotion. Their humble chapel, built in 1916 and dedicated to the Nativity of Our Lady, seemed always to be the center of their community life. The care and attention with which they surround it, give proof of their practical faith.

The present congregation of eighty-five souls, still counts a few of the pioneers who took land in the district in 1897. From all appearances, the new generation is following faithfully in the footsteps of their fathers.

Ten miles north of Ethelbert, at the bend of the road leading into the village of Garland, stands the second of the chapels attached to Sifton. Built in 1920, far from the main road of the district, the chapel was later transferred to its present site. It was blessed on June 28, 1934, under the title of the Blessed Trinity.

The mere preservation of the building rather than any hope for prolonged use in the future, prompted the repairs made recently to this chapel. The decline of the congregation to the present ten members, indicates the uncertain future of the small mission.

Pine River, like most villages in Manitoba, owes its existence to the railway. The first Polish immigrants who followed the thrust of the railway into the bushlands north of Dauphin, reached Pine River in 1902. As new Polish settlers augmented the little colony every year, in 1907, they were numerous enough to begin the construction of a church. But before they finished the crude log-building, a forest fire destroyed it.

Not until 1923, did they again turn their attention to the building of a church. Archbishop Sinnott willingly approved the undertaking. And under Father Orliński's direction they erected a chapel which the Archbishop blessed on July 5, 1928, under the invocation of Ss. Peter and Paul. The church stood in the village, on a choice plot of land adjacent to the railroad station.

The better to organize the care of the missions northwest of Sifton, in 1940, Archbishop Sinnott established a parish at Pine River. With a gift of \$400 from the Catholic Church Extension Society, and some contributions from the people, first the writer, then Father Kręciszewski began the construction of a rectory at Pine River. When Father Z. A. Baczkowski was named pastor in July, he first had to complete the house, then he furnished it with odds and ends of furniture solicited among his friends in Winnipeg. The parish, unaccustomed to a resident priest, accepted his ministrations indifferently. In three years, however, he won the people's confidence so thoroughly, that when he departed, they made their farewells with tears. Although he lived in

conditions bordering on squalor, he gave the parish care such as it had hitherto unknown.

The parochial activities inaugurated by Father Baczkowski continued through the two months' pastorate of the writer and through Father E. Pogorzelski's short term as pastor. In 1944, the Pine River territory again became the responsibility of Father Kręciszewski at Sifton.

But the attempt to fashion a parish out of this undeveloped mission was not given up. When Father Baczkowski returned in 1947, from overseas duty as an Army chaplain, he was again assigned to Pine River. He remained only a year, after which Father Anthony Prusinowski took charge of the mission-parish.

The last priest to reside at Pine River, Father Francis Bielicki, suffered more perhaps than his predecessors. He found the rectory in a state of complete disrepair. With the first severe frost, the floor of the house heaved, the doors refused to shut and the heat seemed to vanish through the walls. He spent many a winter night sleeping fully clothed in a chair beside the heater. But the apathy of the people was even harder to bear than the winter cold. When Archbishop Pocock transferred him in 1952, Pine River saw its last days as a parish.

As a mission, Ss. Peter and Paul's prospers today more than it did as a parish. Under the guidance of Father Iwański, with voluntary labor, the parishioners have completely rebuilt the church and have built a small parish hall to replace the rectory which burned in 1953.

The chapel of Our Lady at Sclater, some fifty miles northwest of Sifton, is in better condition today than at any time since its construction in 1921. Although it was blessed on July 8, 1925, it stood unfinished ¹¹⁵, until Father Iwański added a steeple and made extensive repairs to the building. But with every passing year, the need for a chapel at Sclater diminishes.

The parishioners who built the first chapel in Renwer in 1921, widely miscalculated the size of their parish. The chapel, when finished, hardly accommodated half the congregation. At the blessing of the chapel on July 9, 1925 ¹¹⁶, Archbishop Sinnott placed it under the patronage of St. Joseph.

To relieve the overcrowding, in 1950, Father Prusinowski directed the construction of a new church beside the old one. Although more suitable in size, constructional flaws began to appear even before the building was finished. When Father Bielicki took charge of Pine River as pastor, he saved the Renwer chapel from collapse by bracing the bulging walls and the sagging roof. Father Iwański succeeded in appropriately completing the church, for the blessing by Archbishop Pocock, in 1954.

CHAPTER XXIII

CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH — WINNIPEGOSIS

BEFORE AN ALL-WEATHER ROAD gave free access to the village, Winnipegosis was a little knot of houses and shacks tying the railroad to the lake. The townsfolk lived by fishing, and the railroad served to market their catch. The pattern of its pioneer days is still discernible in the railroad tracks occupying the center of its main street. Entering the town by the highway, one has the uneasy feeling of taking the town unawares by the back door and finding it in disarray. It is seen to its best advantage from the railway, with a row of stores and houses on either side of the track.

When the first Poles came to the district in the spring of 1899, they did not settle in the village which was then springing up. They stopped two miles south of Winnipegosis to enlarge a settlement called Gruber after the man who operated a store there.

The hardships endured in the first years by John

Werchowski, Anthony Gęsicki, Charles Bobiński, Jacob Zwolak and others, were comparable to those experienced by any other Polish pioneers on the soil of Manitoba. These venturesome Poles were among a group of twelve families who had arrived at Sifton from Okno in Poland, in March of 1899. In Sifton they spent three weeks under a huge tent with about thirty other families. Eight of the families were transported by train to Fishing River to take up homesteads.

When a falling tree killed a woman of their group while they were building shacks for shelter, they immediately abandoned the idea of settling in Fishing River. In a desperate effort to move out of this ill-fated marshland, they stopped the train by standing in its path on the railroad track. It was then that Gruber, a passenger on the train, invited them to his settlement. He put them up in a barn until they could build their own log shacks. After about a year they took land in the vicinity of Winnipegosis.

Although a little chapel, under the invocation of All Saints, existed in Winnipegosis for the forty Metis and French families, the Poles did not at first venture there. When Father A. Kulawy first visited them at Gruber on June 4, 1901, and assured them that the church in Winnipegosis was Catholic, then only did they begin to attend Mass in the village.

From 1904 to 1906, Father James Duffy resided in the village as missionary. Later Fathers Adelard Chaumont, Derome, Joseph Chaumont, de Grandpre and Camille Perreault served the Catholics of Winnipegosis either as resident priests or as itinerant

missionaries. At the same time Polish priests from Sifton visited Winnipegosis regularly and held services in the same chapel for the growing Polish congregation. Gradually the preponderance of Polish families changed the unsettled Metis congregation to a small but stable parish.

Father Kręciszewski took the first decisive step in rallying the Poles in Winnipegosis, when in 1935, as pastor at Sifton, he remodelled their chapel. When the Benedictine Sisters built a hospital there in 1937, the first signs of a future parish appeared.

Until 1942, Father Joseph Sieczkarski as chaplain to the Sisters and pastor of the new parish, also served the mission chapels at Fork River, Oak Brae and Rorketon. At the cost of untold difficulty — for the people were poor — Father Sieczkarski succeeded in building a handsome new church in Winnipegosis. Archbishop Sinnott blessed it in 1939 under the title of Corpus Christi. Even though not yet complete, it was at the time the most attractive rural church in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

In the two years of his pastorate at Winnipegosis (1942 to 1944), Father Lucien Sociński concentrated his efforts on paying the debt on the new church. But his transfer interrupted this work, and the writer succeeded him as pastor on January 6, 1944, and remained until September of 1949. In that period, because economic conditions had improved considerably, the parish liquidated the debt, and completed and decorated the church. New furnishings replaced the old ones and in 1948 the Sisters built

a residence for the chaplain who hitherto occupied a room in the hospital.

When Father Mieczysław Trzaskoma took charge of the parish and its missions, he turned his attention not only to maintain the church property but to embellish it, and to strengthen the spiritual life of the parish.

MISSIONS OF WINNIPEGOSIS

The forty families of Our Lady of Loretto mission at Fork River, ten miles south of Winnipegosis, have always received regular pastoral care because of the convenient location of their church in the village.

Fortunately the first Poles in the district never finished the chapel which they began to build in 1908, on a site six miles west of Fork River. When they decided to build a new church in the village in 1929, they asked Father Orliński, then in charge of the mission, for plans for the church. He hastily drew a few lines on a piece of paper, showing the dimensions of the building. These were the blueprints. In their undertaking, the people received financial help from their compatriots living in Winnipegosis, at South Bay and at Ethelbert.

The little church stood stark and unattractive until Father Kręciszewski decorated it in 1936. With the enlargement of the sanctuary and the sacristy in 1945, and the addition of new furnishings, it became a comely place of worship.



The country about the northern shore of Dauphin Lake was impenetrable bushland when a dozen Polish families settled there in 1900. Yet the priests sought them out and visited them at frequent intervals. First the missionaries from Sifton came to the settlement and celebrated Mass in the homes of the settlers. Although Father Anthony Pluciński began the construction of a tiny chapel, he did not see it completed. When Father Solski took charge of the mission in 1914, his first sermon — within the four walls of the roofless chapel — touched the people so deeply that there and then they collected \$150 to finish the building. The blessing took place on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, hence the name of the chapel.

In gratitude for the people's response, Father Solski obtained a bell for the mission. It hangs today in a quaint tower, under a diminutive peaked roof supported by two tall posts.

Today the chapel stands forlorn in its setting of thick brush. As the Poles move out of the district, the chapel is used less and less, particularly in the winter months.

In the early days the spirit of the people was bolstered by men like Andrew Janowski, after whom the local school is named. His personality dominated the Oak Brae mission. His strong faith and good common sense commanded respect in the whole area. When Andrew Janowski died, John Biliński, a leading member of the mission, exercised the same salutary influence on the people. With his passing, the last of the staunch pioneers has gone. Many, it is true,

succeeded in bettering their material condition, but often to the detriment of their faith. The pioneer worthy of a place in the annals of the Poles, is the one who not only established himself materially but who also retained his spiritual heritage intact.



To reach Rorketon for Sunday Mass in the winter months when snowdrifts make the roads impassable for motor cars, the priest leaves Winnipegosis by train on Friday noon. The train makes its leisurely way around the southern end of Dauphin Lake, and after veering north again, arrives at Rorketon late in the evening. If the track continued for eighteen miles in the northwest direction which it takes as it reaches Rorketon, it would end at Winnipegosis, by circling Dauphin Lake.

But the railroad does not continue. It stops abruptly in the center of a vast region between Lake Manitoba and Dauphin Lake. And at the end of the tracks, sprang up the village of Rorketon: friendly, noisy, unkempt. In this sparsely settled country, the village takes on the proportion of a metropolis, with quiet, soggy pasturelands stretching to the east, and rich, fertile farmlands to the west.

Although the main district road by-passes Rorketon by three miles to the east, hardly a car traveling that road but turns into the town. For Rorketon has become a center, a neighborly community meeting place.

It is therefore natural that the chapel which the

first Polish settlers built three miles east of the town, was abandoned, and a new church was erected in the village. Father Sieczkarski built the diminutive chapel in 1940. Successive priests have decorated it, furnished it with pews, and today it has the cozy aspect of a respectable village church.

CHAPTER XXIV

SACRED HEART CHURCH — ROBLIN

NOTWITHSTANDING ITS FAVORABLE location on the railway, and at the intersection of two highways, only ten years ago Roblin had not even a mission chapel. It served merely as a stopover for the priest on his way to the chapel at Merridale, eighteen miles in the hills to the north. Its history as a mission, therefore, is short, and as a parish, shorter still.

In 1939, when a new parish was cut from the sprawling Sifton territory, Father Joe debated whether to make Roblin or Grandview the place of residence for the priest. He decided in favor of Grandview because a chapel existed there, and because of its central location. Even with a priest residing at Grandview, the status of Roblin remained unchanged for eleven years.

When Father Iwański, as pastor of Grandview, ascertained the number of Catholic families at Roblin in 1950, he decided to provide them with a church.

He moved the tiny parish hall from Merridale and the little steeple from its church, to Roblin, and reconstructed them to make the small chapel of the Sacred Heart, which became a mission of Grandview.

After spending a most uncomfortable winter in the tumble-down rectory at Grandview, in the spring of 1957, Father Wacław Pluciński begged Archbishop Pocock to transfer the priest's residence to Roblin. The Archbishop consented. The old but serviceable house which was purchased in Roblin for a rectory, was a great improvement over the Grandview quarters. But because of its location a long distance from the church, Father M. Ronco, who succeeded Father Pluciński, plans to build a new rectory on the church grounds.

The congregation at Roblin is passing through a difficult period of transition from a mission to a parish. With a resident priest in their midst, the people receive regular spiritual attention. But their responsibility towards the church also increases.

Besides his parish at Roblin, Father Ronco serves the chapels at Shortdale, Grandview and Gilbert Plains.



St. Anthony's chapel at Shortdale, begun in 1920 by Father Anthony Pluciński and completed the following year by Father Stroński, has gone through the stages of repair, renovation and repainting without a marked change in the congregation except for a decrease in numbers. Because of its isolation on

the rolling slopes of the Valley River basin, the mission lived a social life of its own centered around the church. The parishioners gathered in their small parish hall for their meetings, their church socials, and, in the early 'thirties, for amateur dramatics. The priests enjoyed visiting this mission because of the neighborly spirit of the people.

The cordiality of the reception tendered the priest was exemplified by the hospitality shown by Joseph Balewicz and his wife. Their sincere delight in receiving the priest in their tidy cottage, and their endless attentions to make him comfortable, more than repaid any inconvenience he experienced on his call of duty. Every Polish priest who has served Shortdale will readily avow that they were the embodiment of genuine Polish hospitality.



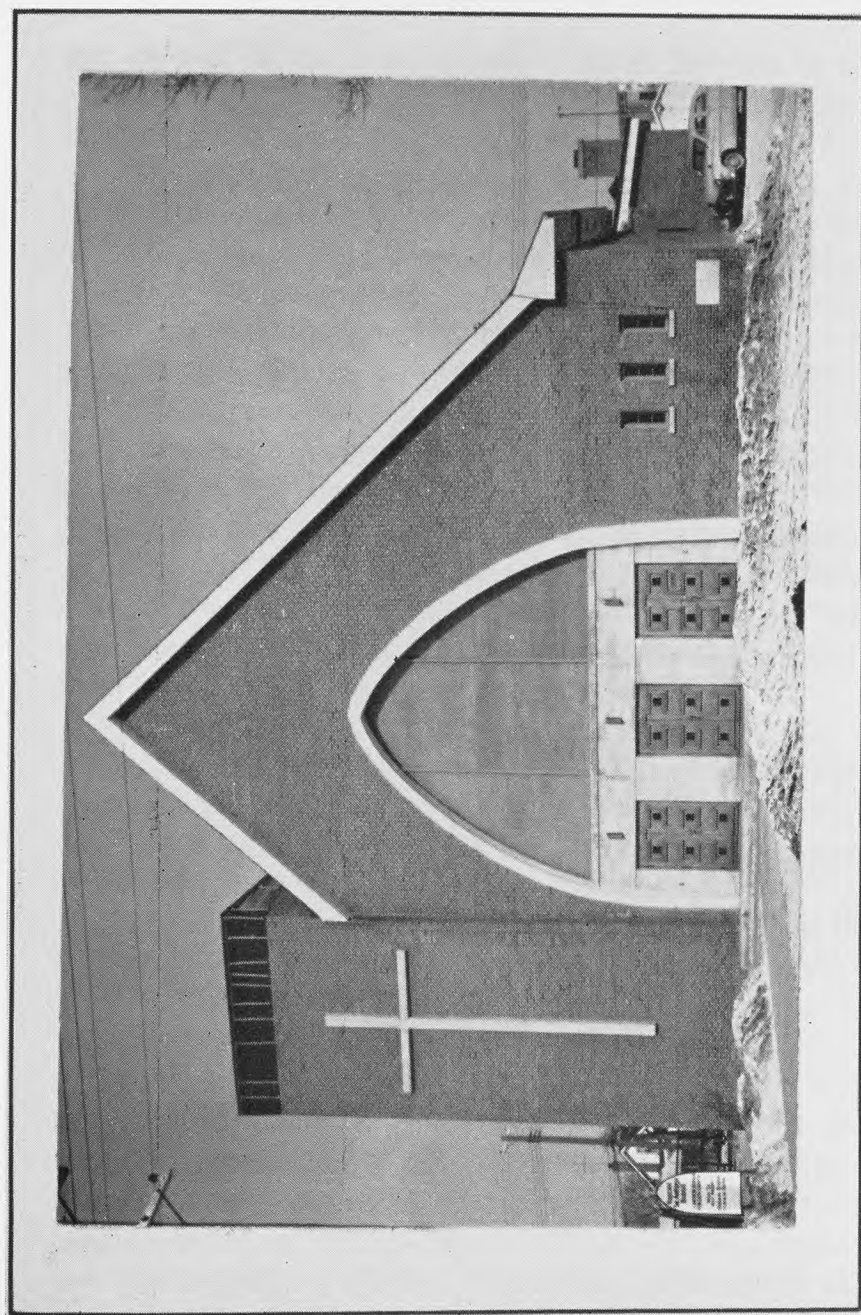
Grandview presents the sorry instance of a mission which had exceptional opportunities to develop into a parish, but through the indifference of a portion of the congregation, lost every advantage, and instead, retrogressed to the status of a mission. For twenty-two years a priest resided at Grandview at considerable personal sacrifice, and for five years a Community of Sisters devoted themselves to the people. But sacrifice and devotion seemed to fall on barren soil.

The ministry began at Grandview in 1901, when Father Delphis Beauregard visited the Catholics there regularly until 1904. Father Houle, who succeeded

him, kept detailed records of his own activities in the district, and thus preserved some of the early history of the mission. He recorded (on May 14, 1905) that he was visiting Grandview every second Sunday of the month, celebrating Mass for the ten resident families and the laborers from Barrows Mill. He used the house of John Sinnott, Canadian National Railway Company contractor, or the King's Hotel, owned by Octave Gaudry, as places of assembly for the Catholics. When he called a meeting of the congregation to plan the building of a church, the people at once contributed \$400 to the project ¹¹⁶.

For unknown reasons, the plan was shelved for a year while Father Lauzon took charge of Grandview. But when Father Houle returned, it again became a live issue. Some wanted to buy an old schoolhouse and convert it into a church; others favored erecting a new building. This divergence of views retarded the project, and Father Houle continued to celebrate Mass in the home of John Sinnott. Finally the urgent need for a chapel brought the factions together, and the people built the church in 1910. For twenty years the pastors of St. Viator's parish in Dauphin served it as a mission ¹¹⁷.

Because the number of Poles in the district had increased considerably, in the early 'thirties St. Margaret's chapel became a mission of Sifton. Further to accommodate the people, in 1939, Archbishop Sinnot established a parish at Grandview. With a gift of \$500 from the Catholic Church Extension Society, Father Kręciszewski (with the writer as his curate and assistant carpenter) built a residence for



Milejszo Photo

St. Andrew Bobola Church, St. Boniface

the priest. It was a mere lean — to at the rear of the church, and it bore the marks of the builders' lack of skill.

The distinction of occupying the rectory as the first pastor fell to Father M. Trzaskoma in the fall of 1939. In 1942, he persuaded the Polish Felician Sisters from Detroit to open a house at Grandview. The Sisters purchased the shabby local hospital with a view to replacing it with a large modern building.

With their arrival, the little parish took on new life. The Sisters supplied the sacristy with vestments and linens and took charge of the sanctuary. The pastor became their chaplain, and his living standard rose noticeably. But as suddenly as the activity began, it ended. The Sisters left Grandview in 1947, and once more St. Margaret's became another mission parish with little prospect of improving.

When Father Iwański became pastor (1949 to 1952), he began various improvements. He enlarged the church, added a new belfry, repaired the rectory and gave the church grounds a trim and neat appearance.

The completion of this work, however, fell to his successor, Father Lucien Sociński. Until December of 1956, he worked mainly to put the parish in an orderly financial position.

It took Father Waclaw Pluciński only a short time to convince Archbishop Pocock that Grandview had had its opportunity to develop and that it had failed. On May 2, 1957, he left Grandview to take up permanent residence at Roblin. Except for a few who regretted the departure of the priest from their midst, the

parish accepted the change with stolid indifference. Today St. Margaret's chapel stands a forlorn mission on the Canadian National Railway line west of Dauphin.



Because of its proximity to Oak Nook to the north and to Grandview to the west, Gilbert Plains, which began as a village in 1898, was without a Catholic church for many years. The few Poles and others who farmed in the district occasionally met in the village, and the priest from Dauphin celebrated Mass for them in the home of Joseph Mormul.

In 1949, Father Iwański, then pastor at Grandview, obtained permission from Archbishop Murray to dismantle the abandoned chapel at Oak Nook and to use the material for a church at Gilbert Plains. The Archbishop approved the undertaking, and Father Iwański built a trim little church from plans he himself had drawn up. He did not succeed in completing the work, however, and his successor, Father Sociński, tastefully finished the interior of the chapel.

The three vocations to the Sisterhood which have come from this small mission, testify to the solid faith of the people.

THE CHAPELS AT ASHVILLE AND KELD

Very Reverend Z. A. J. Baczkowski is able to care for his thriving parish in Dauphin and for the missions at Ashville and Keld, only because he has

the services of a curate, Father Adolph Mikolas. This narrative is not concerned with Father Baczkowski's success in awakening a spiritless parish, nor in his undertaking of building a new church and rectory, but with his more prosaic task of serving the two small Polish missions.

There are still in Manitoba a few Polish missions which repay with an acute sense of failure the priests who serve them. To experience the seeming futility of serving such chapels one must visit them not on a festive occasion such as Christmas, Easter or the Archbishop's visit, but on an ordinary Sunday. The monthly celebration of Mass and the preaching of the word of God leaves no noticeable impression on the minds or the hearts of the handful of people who frequent the chapel.

Some priests have toiled in such conditions for long years, and will go to their graves without betraying their heroic efforts in the service of a few sparse congregations. Their courage is sustained only by their grim hold on that elusive reality that in the Vineyard of the Lord lasting results are achieved not by the artifices of man but by the grace of God.

The Assumption chapel at Ashville — one such example — has shown little sign of progress in its fifty years of existence. Although it was served regularly by the missionaries who called at Sifton, as well as those who resided there, the effect on the people has been negligible. Even Father Kręciszewski whose priestly charity and patience had roused many out of their indifference, avowed the failure of his work at Ashville.

Should anything have awakened in the people an interest for their church, it was the sight of Father Joe renovating their little chapel in the summer of 1941. He went about his work not unlike a St. Francis rebuilding his churches, patiently, bit by bit, and with reverent care. The interest of the congregation did not go beyond a mute stare at the work of their pastor. The subversive sect which had ravaged the Ashville neighborhood in the 'twenties left a desolate swath of spiritual indifference in its wake.

The story of the Precious Blood chapel at Keld is less dismal. The chapel has been variously tended, first from Sifton, then from Grandview and Roblin, and since 1958, from Dauphin.

In the colony of eight Polish families who first cleared land in the Keld district in 1897, was John S. Puchalski. He later moved to Dauphin and became a highly respected citizen of the town. He described the living conditions in the settlement, eighteen miles south of Dauphin, as particularly difficult: the settlers built their own roads, and clearing an acre of land required up to a month's heavy labor.

In 1899, the Poles jointly with other Slavs, built a church, and for three years Polish priests visited the settlement. But this harmony among the Slavs was short-lived, and the Poles sought a place of worship of their own. On the advice of Father Solski then pastor at Sifton, they built a chapel in 1917¹¹⁸ which still serves the congregation today.

T H E E N D

FOOTNOTES

PART I

1. This historical sketch is based on:
O. Halecki — **A History of Poland**, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, and A. Lewicki and J. Friedberg — **Zarys Historii Polski**, Orbis (London) Ltd.
2. Meaning 'dwellers of the fields or plains'.
3. Not to confuse with St. Hedwig, queen of Poland, who died in 1243.
4. **Ogniem i Mieczem, Potop, Pan Wołodyjowski.**
5. Prior of the Paulinian Order.
6. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1905 for his novel **Quo Vadis**.
7. He received the Nobel Prize in 1924 for his book **The Peasants**. A third Pole who received the Nobel Prize (in the field of Physics) was Marie Curie-Skłodowska (1867-1934). She received it jointly with her husband in 1903 for the discovery of polonium and radium. In 1911, she again won the Nobel award for her work in the field of radioactivity. She is the only person on record to have won the coveted Award twice.
8. For an account of Paderewski's five Canadian concerts, cfr. Alexander Grobicki: "Paderewski's Concerts in Toronto, 1892-1905", an article in: **Polish Past in Canada**, Polish Research Institute in Canada, Toronto, 1960.
9. In 1938, the population of Gdynia was estimated at 125,000.
10. The Vicars Apostolic of Keewatin, James Bay, Hudson Bay and Mackenzie, and the Archbishops of St. Boniface and Winnipeg.
11. Victor Turek — **Poles Among the Demeuron Soldiers**, In Papers read before the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series III, Number 9, pp. 53 to 68.

FOOTNOTES

12. **Gazeta Katolicka**, October 2, 1909, "Poles Among the Selkirk Settlers", 100th anniversary of Lord Selkirk. The names of five Poles are listed in this article.
13. Victor Turek — op. cit. p. 60.
14. **Codex Historicus** of the Holy Ghost parish; **Gazeta Katolicka**, March 17, 1908; **Winnipeg Free Press**, December 18, 1957, obituary notice of John Bednarczyk, who came to Winnipeg in 1883.
15. In the partition of 1772, this territory was annexed by Austria.
16. **Dominion Census of Canada**, 1951. 80% of the Poles are listed as Catholics.
17. This was also the opinion of the late Archbishop Murray.
18. **Cloches de St. Boniface**, Vol. LVI No. 9, St. Boniface, Manitoba, September 1, 1957, cfr. Table on p. 289.
19. *Ibidem*, pp. 286 to 289.
20. The Holy Ghost and St. John Cantius parishes in Winnipeg; Polonia; St. Hedwig in Brandon; St. Hyacinth in Portage la Prairie; St. Andrew Bobola in St. Boniface; St. Michael at Cook's Creek.
21. Fathers Francis Strózewski, Z. A. J. Baczkowski, Walter Szumski, John Warczak and E. M. Hubicz.
22. Fathers M. Ronco at Roblin; Father Bernard at St. Hyacinth, Portage la Prairie.
23. In Winnipeg, 1899; Cook's Creek, 1899; Ladywood 1900; Sifton, 1900; Gimli (Felsendorf), 1902; Oakburn, 1901; Polonia, 1901.
24. **45th Anniversary Number of the Northwest Review**, 1930, p. 96.
25. **Codex Juris Canonici**, Canon 492.
26. Holy Ghost and St. John Cantius in Winnipeg.
27. **Gazeta Katolicka**, January 16, 1924 and September 4, 1929.
28. They conducted it from September 1934 to 1954. Cfr. **Gazeta Katolicka**, September 5, 1934.
29. The Holy Name Sisters, the Franciscan Sisters and the Grey Nuns are a few Communities who have Polish subjects.
30. The first three Communities which came to Winnipeg were the Grey Nuns: 1869; Holy Name Sisters: 1874; Sisters of Misericorde: 1899; the Benedictine Sisters were the fourth congregation.
31. **Duszpasterz Polski Zagranicą**, Rok VI, 1955, Kwiecień-czerwiec, Nr. 2 (23).

PART II

32. **Winnipeg Free Press**, April 7, 19, 20, May 4, 9, 13, 28 and November 5, 1955.
The Winnipeg Tribune, April 6, 20, May 4, 13, September 16 and November 9, 1955.
Time, November 21, 1955.

33. **Gazeta Katolicka**, September 5, 1909. Also articles on the occasion of the 25th and the 40th anniversaries of the church.
34. **Gazeta Katolicka**, September 5, 1909.
35. **Northwest Review**, 45th Anniversary number, 1930.
36. He also preached parish missions at St. John Cantius, Sifton, Cook's Creek, Polonia and East Selkirk. Cfr. **Gazeta Katolicka**, January 28, 1925.
37. **Gazeta Katolicka**, March 17, 1908.
38. Letter in Chancery Archives, Archdiocese of Winnipeg.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. **Northwest Review**, 45th Anniversary Number, 1930, p. 118.
42. **Gazeta Katolicka**, September 30, 1925; October 21, 1925.
43. Ibid., September 1922.
44. Ibid., December 19, 1934.
45. Ibid., September 5, 1909.
46. Ibid.

PART III

47. **Cloches de St. Boniface**, September 1, 1957.
48. Ibid.
49. Paul Super — **The Polish Tradition**, An Interpretation of a Nation, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1944.
50. **Gazeta Katolicka**, September 5, 1909.
51. **Czas**, September 28, 1955.
52. **Gazeta Katolicka**, loc. cit.
53. Ibid.
54. **Cloches de St. Boniface**, September 1, 1957.
55. For a review of the situation cfr. **Free Press**, February 13, 1960, "When Manitoba Had Bilingual Schools".
56. The main facts for this sketch are from the parish chronicle of Cook's Creek.
57. **Gazeta Katolicka**, March 17, 1908.
58. Ibid., April 7, 1908.
59. Ibid., September 5, 1909.
60. The facts presented are from the parish chronicle of Ladywood.
61. **Gazeta Katolicka**, September 5, 1909.
62. He was buried on December 6, 1949.
63. **Cloches de St. Boniface**, September 1, 1957.
64. Kindly supplied by Walter Sysiuk.
65. **Gazeta Katolicka**, July 14, 1908.
66. The information for this sketch supplied by Peter Medyński.
67. **Gazeta Katolicka**, September 5, 1909.
68. Monsignor A. D'Eschambault died on May 18, 1960. For obituary notice see **Free Press**, May 19, 1960.

FOOTNOTES

69. The information about Garson and the missions supplied by the pastor, Father C. Holik, O.M.I.
70. The information about East Selkirk taken from the parish chronicle.
71. **Gazeta Katolicka**, September 5, 1909.

PART IV

72. S.J. Somerville — **Papers read before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba**, 1944-45, p. 26.
73. **Gazeta Katolicka**, September 5, 1909.
74. **Northwest Review**, Anniversary Number, p. 97.
75. **Gazeta Katolicka**, February 8, 1933.
76. Ibid. September 6, 1933.
77. Letter of 1904, Chancery Archives, Winnipeg.
78. **Gazeta Katolicka**, July 13, 1909.
79. Ibid. September 5, 1909.
80. Ibid. July, 1911.
81. Cfr. "Extract from a paper read before the Society in 1932 by the late Dr. Alexander J. Hunter, Teulon, Man." **Papers read before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba**, Series III, Number 10, pp. 60 and 61. Fortunately the sniping at the Poles for their affiliation with the Latin Rite of the Church is on the decrease.
82. **Gazeta Katolicka**, December, 1914.
83. **Northwest Review**, Anniversary Number, p. 97.
84. This sketch is a summary of **The History of Our Lady of the Lake Church**, Winnipeg, 1956.
85. Her patronal feast falls on April 24.
86. Letter of February 8, 1917, Chancery Archives, Winnipeg.
87. From the parish chronicle for Arborg, supplied by Father F. Bielicki.

PART V

88. **Northwest Review**, March 6, 1886.
89. Ibid., 45th Anniversary number, p. 118.
90. **Gazeta Katolicka**, July 11, 1908.
91. Letter in Chancery Archives, Winnipeg.
92. **Gazeta Katolicka**, October 15 and October 22, 1930.
93. Ibid., December 2, 1930.
94. Ibid., September 8 and 16, 1931.
95. Ibid., September 5, 1909.
96. Letter in Chancery Archives, Winnipeg.
97. **Gazeta Katolicka**, March 11, 1925.
98. **Northwest Review**, 45th Anniversary Number, p. 119.

99. Parish chronicle and parish register for Elphinstone.
100. A wafer made from the same ingredients as the altar breads.
101. Zofia Kossak — Rok Polski, Veritas Foundation Publication Centre, London, 1955. The author of this book on Polish customs claims that today the Poles sing about 200 carols. Music-lovers know about 60. The last book of Polish Christmas carols, purporting to be complete, contains more than 600 Christmas hymns and songs.
102. *Gazeta Katolicka*, January 11, 1933.
103. Parish register at Elphinstone.
104. *Northwest Review*, 45th Anniversary Number, p. 121.
105. In 1957, Poland celebrated the 700th Anniversary of his death.
106. On August 15, 1930, Sam Buskard of New York bought the church for the Dutch people. Archbishop Sinnott named it St. Samuel, to honor the Hebrew benefactor. In 1936, the church was moved to High Bluff and was rebuilt. In 1954, it was transferred to Teulon and again remodelled.
107. *Northwest Review*, 45th Anniversary Number, p. 119.
108. Cfr. the Decree of erection of the parish, Chancery Archives, Winnipeg.
109. *Western Sunday Visitor*, September 22, 1959.

PART VI

110. W.L. Morton, *Manitoba — A History*, University of Toronto Press, 1957, p. 267.
111. Letter, Chancery Archives, Winnipeg.
112. *Gazeta Katolicka*, August 11, 1915.
113. For an account of the life of Father L. J. Kręciszewski, cfr. E. M. Hubicz, *Father Joe — A Manitoban Missionary*, Veritas Foundation Publication Centre, London, 1959.
114. For the historical articles on the Sifton parish by Father Kręciszewski, cfr. *Gazeta Katolicka*, July 23 and 30, 1930, and *Northwest Review*, Anniversary Number, p. 119.
115. *Gazeta Katolicka*, July 1, 1925.
116. Letter, Chancery Archives, Winnipeg.
117. *Northwest Review*, Anniversary Number, p. 75.
118. *Gazeta Katolicka*, July 1, 1925.

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The book by Rev. E. M. Hubicz, „Polish churches in Manitoba”, was printed on „XOP” paper, Antique Wove, Double Demy, 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ ”35”, 53 lbs., and the illustrations and maps on „Clyde 60 Job Art”, 60 lbs. Set in Ionic number 5 (10 point) type. Linotypist: Stefan Wojtowicz. Typographer: Stanisław Habas, Press operator: Stanisław Pawłowski. Photographs and maps by the author. Printed by the Veritas Foundation Publication Centre in London, under the direction of Zygmunt Kotkowski. Printing completed in September, 1961.

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Hubicz, Edward

Polish churches in Manitoba ...

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Hubicz, Edward

Polish churches in Manitoba ...

St. Joseph's College
U. of Alta., Edmonton

(Continued from front flap)

The book covers the whole of the province of Manitoba where the Poles settled: the cities as well as the rural districts. It is a ready reference of historical data about every Polish church and chapel in the province. Priests and laymen alike will find in it a wealth of information about one of the ethnic groups which make up Manitoba.

For those who are unfamiliar with the province of Manitoba, the maps are a handy aid, while the illustrations convey some idea of the simplicity and the poverty of the early chapels built by the pioneers.

At this time, local history such as this book contains has more meaning for Manitobans of Polish descent, since the country of origin of their fathers is preparing to observe (in 1966) the millenium of Christianity in Poland. The Poles have a long tradition of loyalty to the Church.

St. Joseph College - U of A



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Hubicz, Edward

Polish churches in Manitoba ...

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